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#1618 JUL 2006

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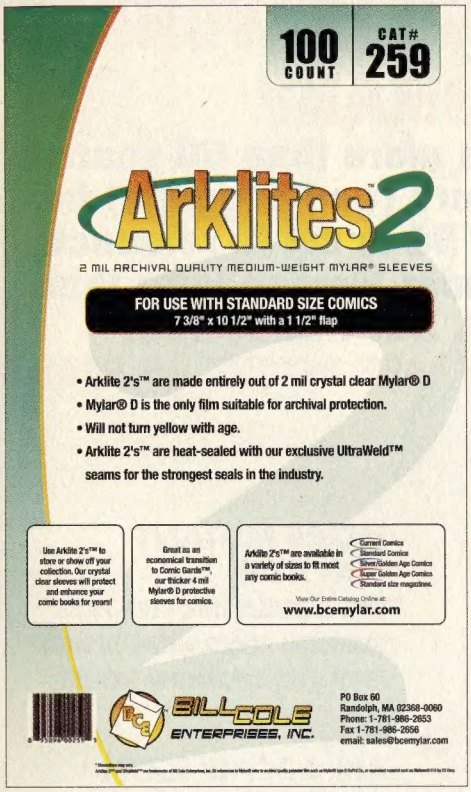

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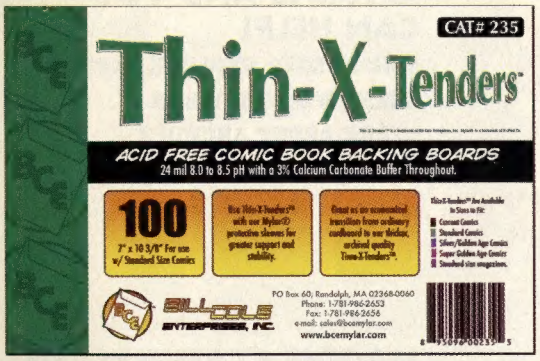

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Issue #1618 July 2006

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With more than 60 years of history (and baggage) behind her, DC is set to relaunch Wonder Woman later this year. But who is she?

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Thanks to Billy, Mark, and Destination Entertainment!

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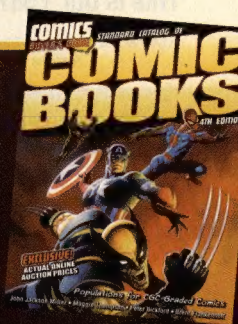

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Production Cel with Presentation Background
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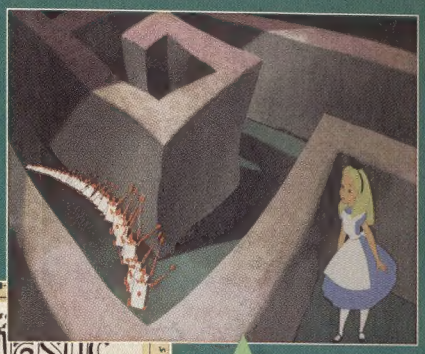

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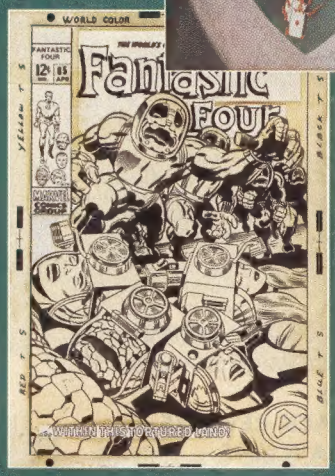

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Find your CBG Fan Awards Ballot elsewhere in this issue to vote by mail or you may vote online at www.CBGXtra.com! (Remember, only one set of votes per person.)

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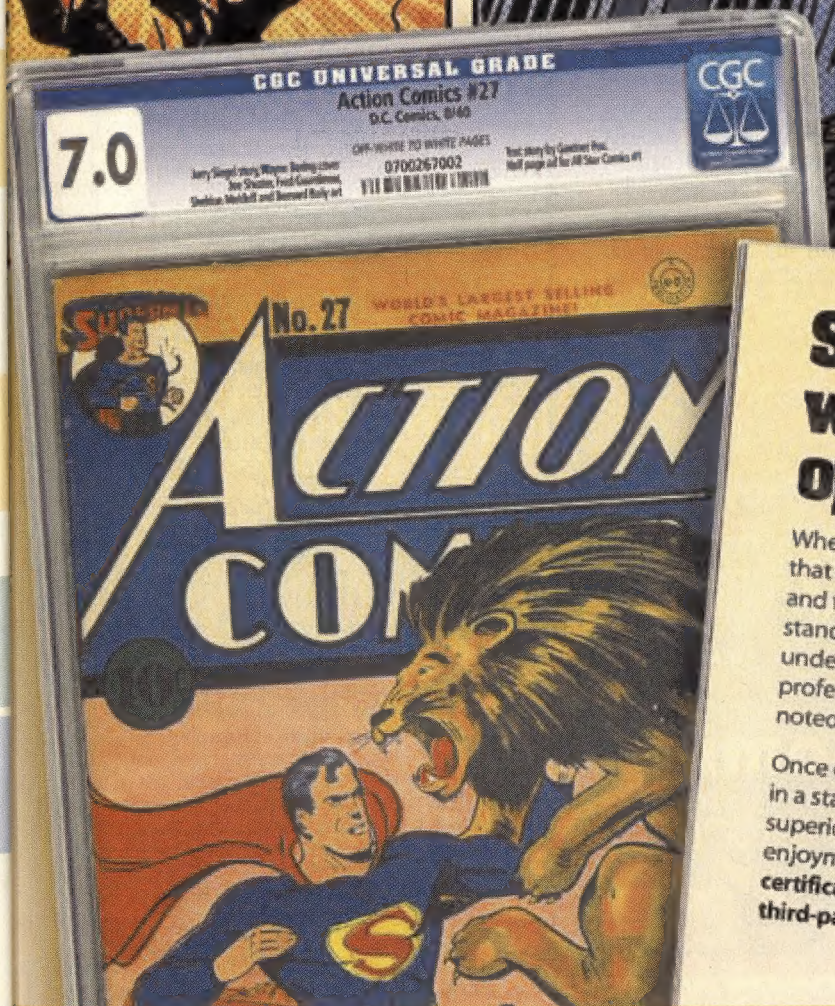

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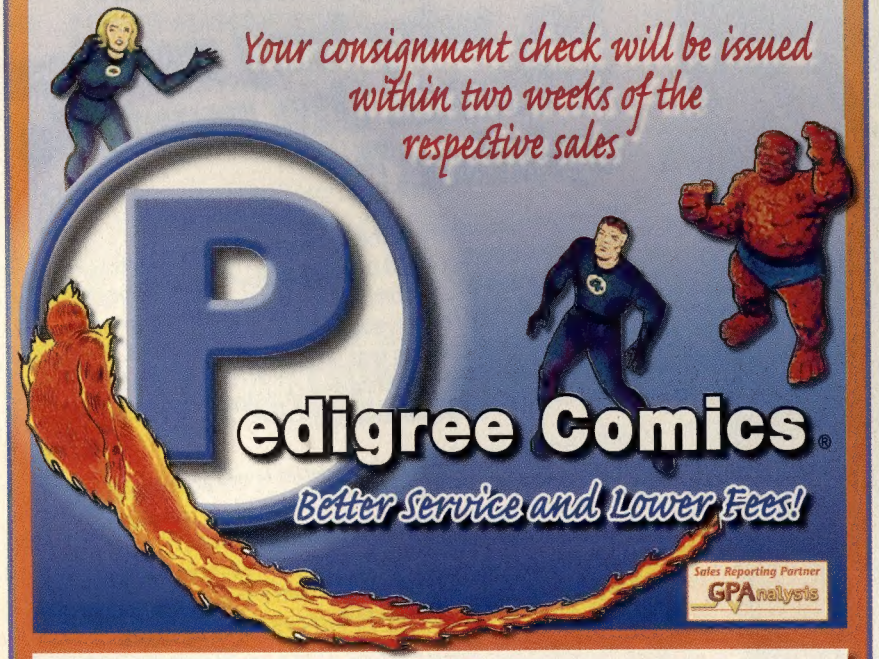

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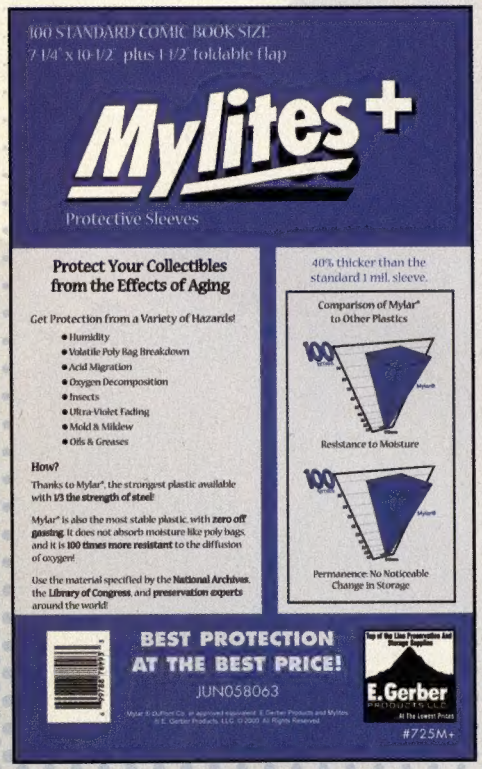

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GUIDEFILE

WAYNE YOUNGBLOOD

JOB: Editorial Director of F+W Publications' Pop Culture Division (Comics, Games, Toys, and Music).

PREVIOUS LIVES: Stamp god. I have written for or edited every major philatelic title in existence (and some no longer in existence).

FIRST COMIC BOOK: *Fantastic Four* #3 (or was that *Tepid Three* #4?). It helped see me through my tonsilectomy. It likely still exists, but is minus the cover and the first few pages.

FIRST *CBG*: #778 (as reader); #1613 (as editorial director).

NOW READING: *Persepolis* #1 and #2, *Infinite Crisis*, re-reading *Tomb of Dracula* #1-17

AND WITHOUT PICTURES: *Life of Pi* by Jann Martel, *The Hiram Key* by Christopher Knight and Robert Lomas, *The Long Emergency* by James H. Kunstler.

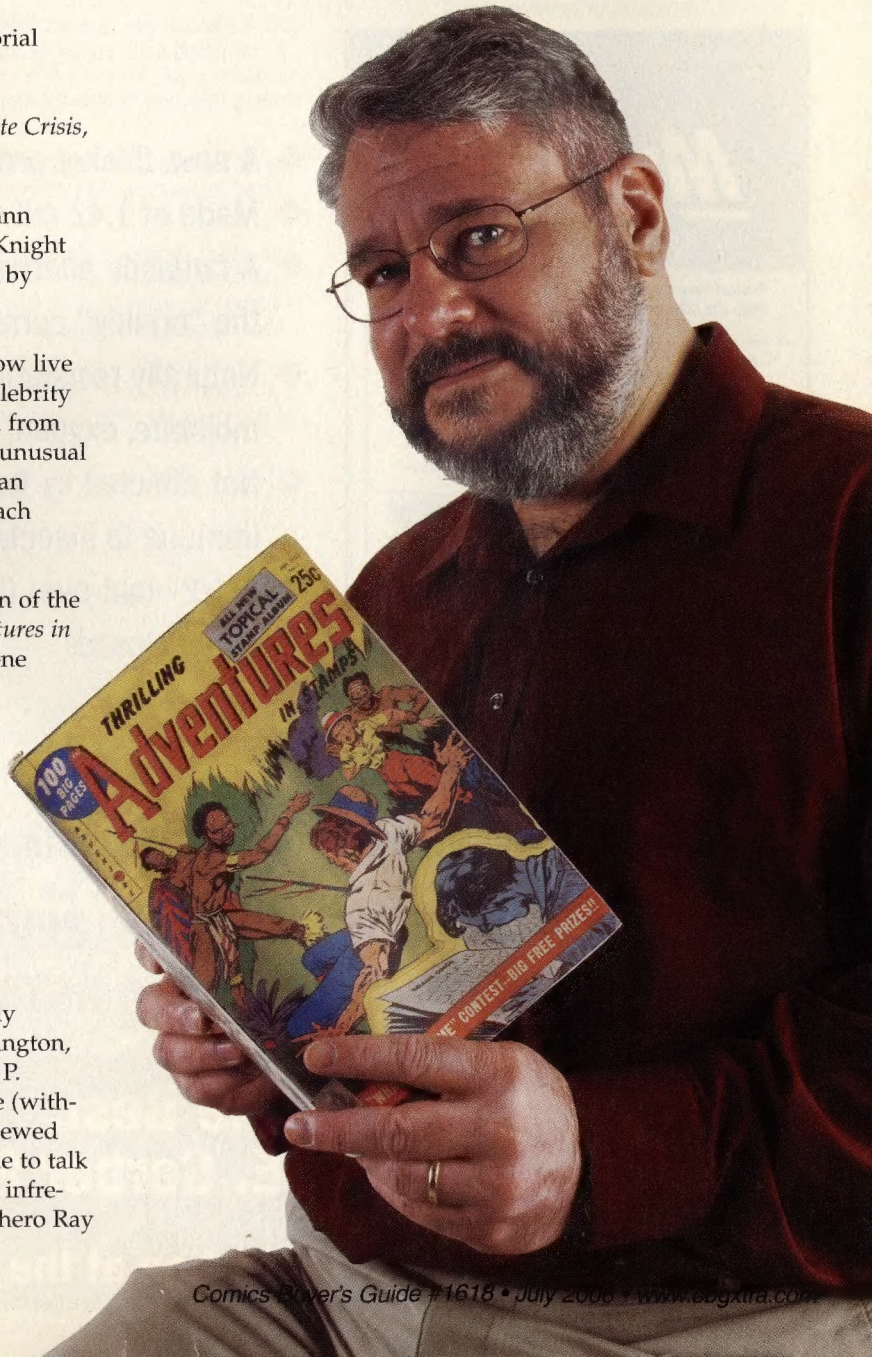
THAT AND A BUCK WILL GET YOU: I now live in the once-summer home of a semi-celebrity (John Volstad, the other brother Darryl from the *Bob Newhart Show*); I also have the unusual distinction of having cowboy and Indian ancestors that may well have fought each other out West.

BRAGGING RIGHTS: A complete collection of the late Golden Age series, *Thrilling Adventures in Stamps*, a short-lived and rare title no one else cares about.

ESCAPES FROM COMICS: Writing non-fiction historical books (currently working on a volume dealing with all types of preserved people, including mummies); growing exotic hot peppers and creating new sauces for my small hobby business (Hotsauceguy).

BRUSHES WITH GREATNESS: I was nearly knocked over in a hotel lobby in Washington, D.C., by then-secretary of state George P. Shultz and his Secret Service entourage (without an "excuse me" or "sorry"); interviewed Ian Anderson (Jethro Tull) and had time to talk about our mutual hot pepper interests; infrequent correspondence with childhood hero Ray Bradbury and, just recently, at the New York Comic-Con, the opportunity for an extended chat with Gloria Steinem

QUOTE FOR LIFE: "If you're a thinking person … and if you're lucky, you'll spend the first 13 years of your life being indoctrinated and the rest of your life breaking that indoctrination." (Wayne L. Youngblood)



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Who Is Wonder Woman?

Examining the rebirth of an icon

Like fellow Justice Leaguer The Flash, Wonder Woman recently took her bow. With #226, the current series comes to an end, and fans of the Amazonian princess will have to wait until June to get more of her in a new ongoing series written by Allan Heinberg and illustrated by Terry and wife Rachel Dodson. The first arc, "Who is Wonder Woman?" summarizes what fans know about this new series — making for a surprise all the bigger once #1 ships June 7.

by RAY SIDMAN

"Let's more make this book interesting to someone who hasn't read all the issues of *Wonder Woman*."
— Terry Dodson

Heinberg and Terry Dodson spoke to ***CBG*** about working on the series and their visions of her.

Who is Allan Heinberg?

Heinberg, known for his work on *JLA*, *Young Avengers*, and television's *The OC* and *Sex and the City*, said that though he's only been a comic-book writer since last year, he's long been a fan of Wonder Woman, reading her comics since 1974. "I fell in love with Wonder Woman after reading (Volume 1) #212, just after she'd regained her powers and her memory and decided to subject herself to 12 Herculean

Images © DC Comics

labors before rejoining the JLA. She seemed to me so powerful and so vulnerable at the same time. You didn't see Batman or Superman expressing that kind of open-hearted vulnerability in 1974, and it made Wonder Woman a much more compelling and relatable character to me as a result."

He tipped his hat to several creators from that time and since. "I'm a huge fan of George Pérez' landmark run on the book. I loved William Messner-Loebs' and Mike Deodato's 'The Contest' storyline. Phil Jimenez' gorgeous, loving rendition of the character is a personal favorite, and I'm still in awe of Greg Rucka's fiercely intelligent, complex, and compassionate portrait of Diana and her supporting cast."

The writer also said that his comic-book background began "as a DC kid" in the '70s, reading such titles as *Justice League of America, All-Star Comics, Batman Family, Legion of Super-Heroes*, and of course *Wonder Woman*. "These were among my favorites," said Heinberg. In the '80s he added *X-Men, Spider-Man*, and *The Avengers* to his repertoire, followed by becoming a huge fan of DC's Vertigo imprint in the 1990s. He cited Alan Moore, Neil Gaiman, Grant Morrison, Jamie Delano, and Peter Milligan as writers who "had a profound effect on me as a comics reader."

Who is Terry Dodson?

Dodson, who is doing both interior and cover art for the series, has illustrated a plethora of big names over the years —many of those projects with wife Rachel — including Superman, Spider-Man, Batman, The Hulk, Star Wars, and X-Men. However, until now, the only professional credentials he's had drawing Wonder Woman is a DC holiday card a few years ago. But that doesn't detract from his enjoyment of the character.

"My fondest memory is the TV show, especially Lynda Carter's portrayal of her. I know I haven't watched the show in 20 years, but it's always what I think of when I think of Wonder Woman." Just as strong, he said, is his preference for Alex Ross' portrayal of her in *Kingdom Come*. He also cited Darwyn Cooke's version of her in his *DC: The New Frontier* limited series a couple years ago.

"I think the character's great and that's why I wanted to work on her," commented Dodson, "but Allan is a much bigger wonder Woman fan. What's been a key to our relationship is that I play devil's advocate to a lot of what he has in mind — not that he has bad ideas, just that I'm a little more objective. We get along really well that way."

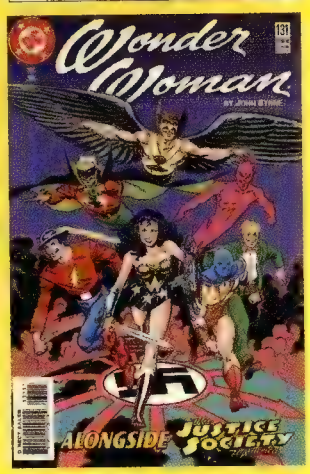
Dodson said that during the creative process with Heinberg, he comes from the angle of: "Let's more make this book interesting to someone who hasn't read all the issues of *Wonder Woman*."

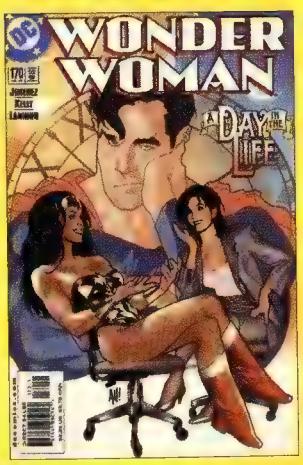
Regarding Heinberg, with whom he's working for the first time: "He's a fan of my stuff, and when I heard his name, I knew what he'd done. He's great to work with, a nice guy, and really enthusiastic about the material."

Heinberg noted Dodson's "extraordinarily distinctive storytelling style" that makes each book "become its own unique entity."

While talking to ***CBG***, the two elaborated on their creative processes. When asked to compare writing comics to writing television scripts, Heinberg replied, "I approach the books differently because the characters are so different. With *Wonder Woman*, I've tried to figure out precisely who she is and what she wants, and then I've tried to allow the story to grow out of her needs, her desires, and her weaknesses."

"You didn't see Batman or Superman expressing that kind of open-hearted vulnerability in 1974."
— Allan Heinberg





Regarding the target audience of new reader vs. longtime fan, Heinberg said he and Dodson are building the first arc aimed at both audiences.

Dodson described his approach to illustrating such a historic and popular figure. "As far as her appearance or the way she carries herself, I had a lot of strong ideas. It's tough to separate yourself — with her being one of the trinity of the DC universe — to really put a stamp on her."

As Dodson put it, readers can expect a more dignified Amazonian princess. He's making her costume slightly bigger, covering her more. "She's a princess and she's wearing this really small outfit, compared to most people. I'm trying to cover her up as much as I can just to keep as much dignity as possible." Another aspect of his bigger-is-better, he's also making bracers and her chest emblem bigger.

The artist is also working to make the costume more realistic. "I'm putting seams in it, and a place in the back where you can see where it attaches — subtle little things like that. With a film coming out, that puts impetus to make it as realistic as possible, but no one said that to me; that's just kind of the way I was thinking of the design." As for the character's actual figure, Dodson said he's drawing it as "sexy but not overtly sexual. I want to make her look strong."

Looking ahead, both expressed passion for the project, long-term. "I would love to stay on the book for as long as DC and Terry Dodson will have me," said Heinberg, "but I currently have a few outstanding writing commitments that may not allow for as long a run as I'd like."

As for Dodson: "I'll be on the book as long as there are engaging scripts for me to draw. I'm having a good time."

WONDER WOMAN'S LONG, STRANGE TRIP

Images © DC Comics

by **CRAIG SHUTT**

As one of the most recognized, longest lived, and most powerful super-heroes of all time, Wonder Woman sports an extensive history — one that is possibly the quirkiest of all. It's amazing that such a statement can even be considered for a woman who forms a super-trinity with an incredibly powerful guy who's been known to give himself the head of an ant and an incredibly scary guy who's been known to wear zebra-striped costumes.

Wonder Woman made a habit of appearing in multiple forms on her Silver Age covers, as in #111.

Wonder Woman burst into the Golden Age of comics in *All Star Comics* #8 (Jan 42). She was created by Dr. William Moulton Marston, a psychologist with truly quirky ideas about relationships. Marston originally was hired to DC's editorial board to add an aura of credibility to the fledgling industry. He soon convinced editors that they should allow him to create a super-woman character — but his creation was so much more.

Her introduction probably should have been a warning that her career was going to have a few moments when readers would ask, "What the heck were they thinking?" She appeared in a nine-page short after a 55-page adventure by The Justice Society of America. There's no mention of her introduction on the cover, and she played no role in the JSA tale. She was just — there. The issue featured eight more pages than most comics of the time, so it's possible she was simply shoehorned into the issue to give her an abrupt introduction prior to her first major appearance.

The story had its own quirkiness. Two pages in, it suddenly changed to illustrated text for several pages, as Wonder Woman's mother, Queen Hippolyte, told the history of the Amazons and Paradise Island. That's where U.S. Army Intelligence Major Steven Trevor had crash-landed (as we learned in a flashback), becoming the first man to set foot on the Amazonian island. His predicament indicated the dire straits into which the world had plunged, so he was sent back to America accompanied by the island's most worthy Amazon.

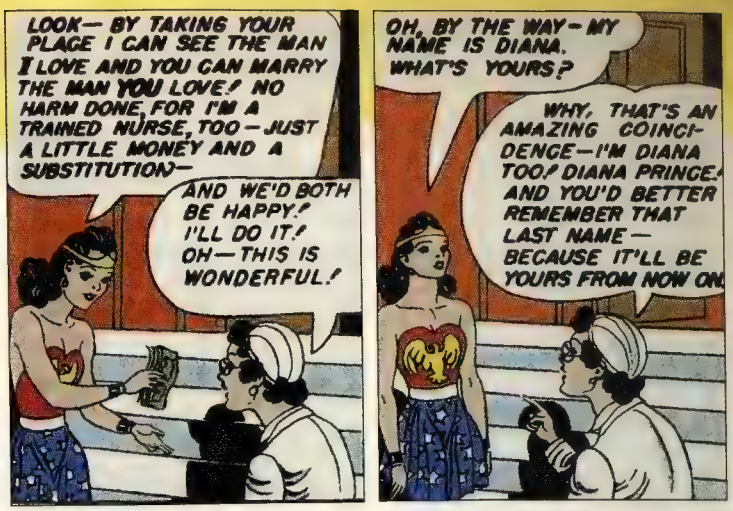
That turned out to be Diana, Hippolyte's daughter, who went to America "to fight for liberty and freedom and all womankind." Bizarrely, fighting for all womankind often involved being tied or manacled. Marston, writing as Charles Moulton, often invoked his philosophy of loving bondage under a woman's guidance as the path to true happiness. Wonder Woman and other females often found themselves trussed up — and many times enjoyed it and even asked for it. How this stuff got past the editor and stayed unremarked-upon by the public remains a mystery, adding special irony to a title whose author was hired to make comics more acceptable as kiddie reading.

Even something as basic as devising a secret identity offered unusual quirks. Most heroes, of course, create their super-hero self, but Diana began life as Wonder Woman and needed a human disguise. To resolve this, The Amazon Princess simply bought the identity of the real Diana Prince. In *Sensation Comics* #1 (Jan 42), her next (and first cover-featured) appearance, Wonder Woman dropped Steve at the hospital in Washington, D.C., and then returned the next day, pondering how she could get in to visit him.

She spotted a nurse crying on the hospital steps. The woman explained that her fiancé had just left for South America, but she didn't have the money to join him. Diana noticed that, when the woman took off her glasses, they looked virtually identical. Who'd have ever thought? So the Amazonian Princess gave the woman the money she needed in exchange for her identity. And, since Wonder Woman was a trained nurse, too, she could slip right into this new guise. By an even more amazing coincidence, the woman's name was Diana Prince! So Princess Diana became Diana Prince in possibly the wackiest identity-creating scenario in all of comics history.

That tale was retold during another quirky point in Diana's history, during the Silver Age of comics. Those adventures unofficially began, when Harry Peter, the original artist hired by Marston, left the series and was replaced by Ross Andru (pencils) and Mike Esposito (inker) with *Wonder Woman* #98 (May 58). Robert Kanigher, who began writing the series after Marston, created his own quirky world, featuring Merman, Birdman, and other fantasy creatures who vied for Diana's hand along with poor, clueless Steve Trevor.

One of Kanigher's favorite tricks was having Wonder Woman appear more than once on the cover, either through mirrors, doppelgängers, or other incarnations. This quirk appeared about once a year prior to #98. Then, in the next 19 issues, she appeared more than once on the cover five times. In #124 (Aug 61), those opportunities were ramped up significantly, when she experienced her first "Impossible Day" and gained several other recurring forms.

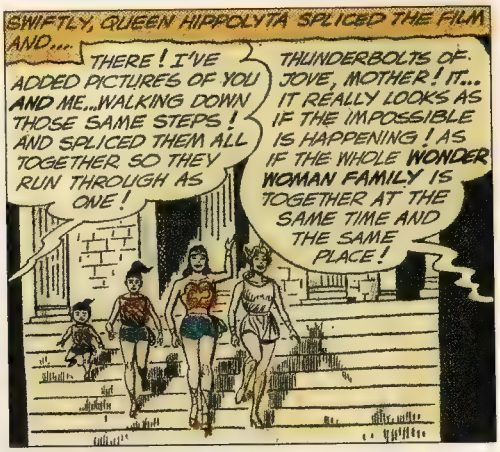


Buying the identity of a woman with virtually the same looks, name, and talents as you, as Wonder Woman did in* Sensation *#1? Priceless.

In that tale, her mother spliced together home movies of Diana as a tot, girl, and woman. The result was a movie in which three ages of Wonder Woman could have an adventure together. Soon, all three incarnations were appearing together in stories (and on the covers, when Diana herself wasn't duplicated somehow). No explanation for how the characters appeared was given; readers were just expected to accept that the characters existed.

Sadly, DC editors accepted this idea, too, leading them to simply lift Wonder Girl and add her to the new Teen Titans group in *The Brave and the Bold* #60 (Jul 65). It took them a few years to realize the error — or, at least, address it. That elaboration occurred during one more quirky era in Wonder Woman's career.

But before she got there, she relived her Golden Age years, thanks to Kanigher's decision to take the entire series back through time. At the end of #158 (Nov 65) — a truly sad affair that featured her battle with Egg Fu — the comic's unseen editor announced that he was "retiring" the entire supporting cast and that, in the next issue, "the Golden Age will live again!" In that next issue, Diana's origin was retold, with Andru and Esposito mimicking Peter's Golden Age art style. In #162 (May 66), the tale of Princess Diana buying Diana Prince's identity was retold. This silliness lasted until #165 (Oct 66), when she returned to the present to take on Paper Man and Dr. Psycho.



Mom's home movies let Diana experience an Impossible Day of adventuring with herself in #124.

DC was having a hard time finding a niche for Wonder Woman, and, in 1968, as the camp fad died and super-heroes in general were

Wonder Woman's adventures and art style took on a Golden Age flavor beginning in #159.

looking uncool, Diana went with the flow. Under the guidance of editor and artist Mike Sekowsky, Wonder Woman lost her super-powers and came under the influence of mysterious Asian wise man I Ching.

Diana swapped her wonder togs in #178 (Oct 68) for mod clothes that seemed fashioned on the styles worn by Emma Peel in the *Avengers* TV show that had been introduced to U.S. audiences in 1966. Diana began jet-setting around the world, combating a spy organization, meeting witches, and having a far wider and more interesting range of adventures — but they had little to do with Wonder Woman. The tie to her Amazonian past was cut completely (for a while) in #179 (Dec 68), when her mother and the Amazons left for another dimension, leaving Diana behind, without her powers.

So about one year later, in *Teen Titans* #22 (Aug 69), it seemed reasonable that Wonder Girl's dizzy spells were related to the Amazon's leaving Earth. But Wonder Girl admitted that that couldn't be the cause, since she wasn't really an Amazon. In fact, she'd been saved as an infant from a deadly fire by Wonder Woman, who'd raised her on Paradise Island after giving her super-powers. So she really had no connection to Wonder Woman and certainly wasn't a cinematic version of her younger self brought to life by a clueless editor. Heck, no!

Wonder Woman became just another mad mod maiden named Diana in #178.

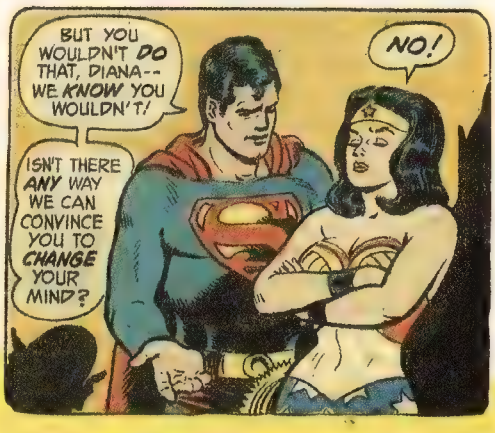
Needless to say, having Wonder Woman wandering around without her highly merchandisable costume couldn't last for too long, even in a period when super-heroes weren't all that popular. So in *Wonder Woman* #204 (Feb 73), Diana ended her mod career, when a sniper snuffed I Ching, and Wondie's battle with the assassin gave her amnesia.

She wound up on Paradise Island, where Hippolyta reinstated her memory but omitted several key segments, including the ones with I Ching. Mom also restored daughter's powers, and, when Diana won another Amazonian rite of combat, she returned to the mainland and became a translator at the United Nations.

Things went smoothly until she ran into Clark Kent in *Wonder Woman* #212 (Jul 74). He asked when she'd regained her powers, and she didn't know she'd lost them — or that she'd resigned from The JLA. Shocked, she refused to rejoin the team until she had proven that her memory wouldn't go AWOL again. So The JLAers watched over her during her next series of adventures, passing the torch to another member after relating her latest tale.

Her career through the next decade remained somewhat shaky, leading her to become one of the few heroes who truly felt the impact of the *Crisis on Infinite Earths* mega-series. By its end, Wonder Woman had been reverted to the clay from which her mother had originally formed her, leaving a new slate for George Pérez to tell tales. Sadly, the new series acted as if Wonder Woman had never previously existed, causing *all* her past adventures to be eliminated retroactively. (Black Canary was said to have performed her role in The Justice League.)

After that mega-explosion of misguided quirkiness, the Amazonian Princess went on to achieve true depth and less quirkiness. Of course, "less quirkiness" by that point could be obtained simply by not bringing up Egg Fu or I Ching.



Memory restored, Wonder Woman refused to rejoin The JLA until she proved herself to the members in* Wonder Woman *#212.

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Eat your guts out

Meet the new *Hellblazer* team

Images ©2006 DC Comics.

by **RAY SIDMAN**

When asked by Vertigo Editor Jonathan Vankin if she'd be interested in taking the helm on the long-running series, novelist Denise Mina told ***CBG***, "I almost bit his hand off. Just to get the money up, I told him I'd eat my own guts to write *Hellblazer*. Very fly."

With #216, Mina took over for Mike Carey, writer since 2002 with #175. In joining series artist Leonardo Manco, she brings with her an award-winning background of published crime-fiction novels, stories with a twist of the macabre, dark, and disturbing. Her novels *Garnethill*, *Exile*, *Resolution*, *Sanctum*, and — the new one — *The Field of Blood* tend to involve murder, mutilation, and often sexual abuse.

What may be more important, she lives in Glasgow, Scotland, and has traveled and lived in several other regions recognizable to comics readers as John Constantine's European stomping grounds in *Hellblazer*. (Though it's true that he also spent no small amount of time in the United States some time ago.)

Vankin, editor on *Hellblazer* since #201, talked to ***CBG*** about the events that had led him to Mina. He found from reading a feature on her and, then, some of her novels, "Her tone was very dark but also very human. Her novels were certainly dark and pretty twisted in a lot of ways, and she really is fascinated by the more gruesome and depressing elements of human nature, but at the same time her characters are very human and well-rounded: *extremely* well-rounded and real. They're people that you can believe really exist, and I thought that was a great thing to bring to Constantine."

The human element of Mina's writing is a trait Vankin said fits

Constantine, because, "He is a very human guy. He's a flawed person, he can be very selfish, but at the same time he cares about his friends — yet he certainly doesn't do anything to protect them when push comes to shove. He has a lot of qualities that I think a lot of people can relate to."

The editor also commented that Constantine has had an impressive run with the series' many writers. "He's a very complicated character, one to whom every writer who's approached him has been able to bring something new and different. At the same time, the core of the character remains the same. What makes him really work is when a writer can make you believe he is a real person.

"Look at the whole history of the comic," said Vankin, "and it's pretty uniformly good all the way through. Any comic's going to have its ups and downs, but it's hard to pick *Hellblazer* stories that are complete duds. I think almost all the storylines have been pretty interesting.

"There aren't many other characters with that kind of longevity that you can say that about."

Mina said she's a fan of the series and has been reading it for about five years. Prior to that, her comic-book background included reading Art Spiegelman's *Maus*, then Vertigo's *Preacher*, *The Invisibles*, and *Hellblazer*.

Where does she plan to take protagonist John Constantine, the chain-smoking anti-hero master of magic with a penchant for finding trouble and suffering of the eternal-Hell variety? Starting with recent events in the character's life, she sketched out where she's taking him.

There will be a pause, while ***CBG*** invokes its ***Spoiler Warning*** on the next three paragraphs for those who prefer to read the story as it unfolds.

Mina said, "John becomes infected with empathy and makes a friend, both of which tie into his long history of killing anyone he becomes chums with. He has to examine his conscience and make a decision about the purpose of his life, so obviously it goes to the heart of all of his previous stories. In various issues he has to talk about Kit and what has happened to Cheryl and Chas, deny having dated a monkey in a wig, and remember a deal he did with some major heavies 100 issues ago."

All this takes him out of the bonnie U.K. "John moves to Glasgow in Scotland and meets a new group of people and the world is fundamentally altered." Similarly, John's Earthly traveling isn't the only thing Mina intends to shake up. "A mistaken premise in our understanding of the infrastructure of the universe is uncovered and starts a war. In the second arc, he attempts to atone for his sins and the calamity he has brought to those close to him."

Of course, she'll bring some of her novelist's sensibilities with her: a dark, crime element that should complement Constantine well. "I'm dependent on a murder every so often for storytelling purposes. Hopefully, it is quite magical as well, but John *does* become more of a detective than an all-knowing smarty-pants with a bit of magic powder."

All this in her contracted 13 issues. Mina said she'd like to do more and may come back later, but for now commitments and other time restrictions prevent her from writing more than the baker's dozen of issues.

When asked about her target audience and new vs. longtime fans, she replied that it's difficult to say. "I can't write for an audience like that. I prefer to write for my own entertainment and maybe for the amusement of a couple of friends rather than an imagined audience that I don't really know. That way lies madness. I hope both groups will enjoy it, but I also hope

"[illegible] become more of a [illegible] all-knowing smarty-pants with a bit of magic powder." — Denise Mina

Covering Constantine

As Vertigo showed with *Papa Midnite* last year and the other *Hellblazer*-related mini-series and one-shots over the years, the imprint is capable of expanding the Constantine universe with additional titles. Editor Jonathan Vankin told ***CBG*** that there are a few ideas in the works, though nothing's finalized.

"Constantine's niece Gemma Constantine is a prime candidate for her own (at least) mini-series — that's definitely been thought about."

As for the main series, the cover artist will change in the near future. Lee Bermejo — artist on last year's *Lex Luthor: Man of Steel* and a couple of fill-in issues of *Hellblazer* —will draw the cover on #218 and will take over covers full-time #221.

Will fan-favorite cover-artist Tim Bradstreet return to the title one day? Vankin said he and Bradstreet have spoken more than once about the artist writing and drawing an entire issue of *Hellblazer*, though the timing has never been right; at the moment, there are no such plans.

"I love the moral ambivalence of Hellblazer. Good guys do bad things, vice versa, and the ethical choices are always more complex than they appear to be."
— Denise Mina

that the publicity will bring a newer audience — or an old audience — back to *Hellblazer*.

"John's such a great character. It should be read more widely."

What attracted her to *Hellblazer*? "As a reader, I love anything that messes with canon law because of my failed Catholic background, and I like the fact that abstract ideas such as Hell and evil are dealt with visually. Most of all I love the moral ambivalence of *Hellblazer*. Good guys do bad things, *vice versa*, and the ethical choices are always more complex than they appear to be. This is what great literature does best and what is sadly missing from a lot of novelized writing now.

"As a writer, I love it because Constantine is super-cool and the form is so different it's a real challenge."

The differences from writing novels keep her on her toes. She commented that story arcs and pace are the same for all storytelling forms, though there are notable differences between the formats. "No one can move in a panel. Everything has to be very still, and the story has to work in 22-page episodes as well as in a larger span. Writing comics has taught me a lot about pace."

She continued, "Comics books are so spare, you can't hide in description or asides or characterization. You can't hide plot devices in apparently irrelevant bits of prose. As a writer, comics and novels are very different: it's possible to tell stories in comics that would be very difficult in prose — the illustration adds weight to the fantastical, and abstract ideas can be represented visually."

Hellblazer on HBO?

Hellblazer Editor Jonathan Vankin voiced his enjoyment of the Keanu Reeves' *Constantine* but added, "I would love to see them do it in more of a purist form. I think there are a lot of good British actors at this point who could carry the film commercially as well as creatively. I hope they do something like that."

Vankin said he felt television could provide a strong format for the series. "I'd like to see an HBO series. I think Constantine would make a great HBO series: an hour a week, 12 hours per season. I think they'd do a terrific job with it on HBO."

She also tipped her hat to comics writers, especially established novelists who try their hand at it. "The comics don't pay anything like as much as novels. A lot of novelists have started writing comics, and fans should know that we're all taking massive cuts in income to do it."

The person handling the visual aspects of Mina's ideas and plotlines is Leonardo Manco, who — after a couple fill-in issues and the *Hellblazer* graphic novel *All His Engines* — has been with the series full-time with #201, though he has read it since its inception.

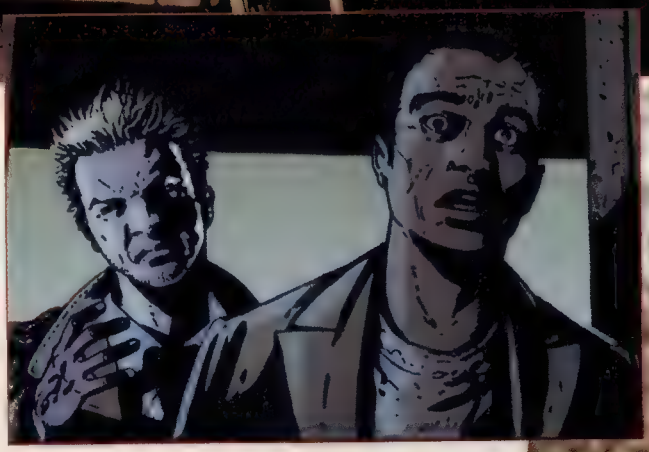
From his home in Buenos Ares, Argentina, Manco spoke to ***CBG*** about his job and his longtime desire to be part of *Hellblazer*. "Since a long time ago, my intention was to work for this title," he said. "In fact, I met this character in 'American Gothic,' Alan Moore's saga, and, since then, I was willing to work on him. So, in order to reach that goal, I had to work for other titles for other companies. And always, every time I had a chance, I visited the editors to show them my vision of Constantine, but I was always rejected."

He worked for Marvel and Acclaim on such titles as *Apache Skies* and *Blaze of Glory* — "I consider the Western one of my favorite genres." During this time, he exercised patience and vigilance and continued to pursue his dream. "Ten years passed, until William Dennis appeared and he had the same vision I had and gave me the opportunity." Vankin, who replaced Dennis, voiced his support for the artist. "I think he's one of the best there is. I think he's a brilliant, brilliant artist. I mean, for that style of photo-realism, he just really jumps out at you."

More for Mina

Denise Mina said she's exploring more territory in the comics industry, with an upcoming DC graphic novel titled *A Sickness in the Family*.

In general, she indicated she's enthusiastic about her comics-writing experience thus far. "I'd love to do more comics. Seeing your work as a finished comic is a wild buzz, and the stories you can write are so different from novels. It's incredibly stimulating."



"He is an unlimited character, and there is still a lot to explore in him. I think he is a hero and anti-hero who can be capable of representing us in several aspects, and that is quite appealing."
— Leonardo Manco

Inspiring this sort of drive in an artist is no small feat, and Manco discussed why he felt so strongly about Constantine. "He is an unlimited character, and there is still a lot to explore in him. I think he is a hero and anti-hero who can be capable of representing us in several aspects, and that is quite appealing."

Manco's influences are many and familiar to comics fans. "I love Dave McKean, John Van Fleet, Bill Sienkiewicz, and especially Al Williamson in an old work he did a long time ago for the comics adaptation of *Blade Runner*. In fact, I was a kid, and, when I put my hands on it, I really loved it." Still, Manco's most notable inspirations come from outside the comics industry. "I must admit that what mostly influences my work is being a fan of David Fincher and Ridley Scott. Although they are not comics artists, I aim at capturing their visual concepts and transferring them to my work."

Looking to the future, he said that he's exclusively working on *Hellblazer* right now and hopes to stay with the series for a long time. However, he said he'd like to add cover work to his schedule. "Being a cover artist would be very refreshing." He also expressed the desire to write stories for Vertigo, which he described as "the place I like to be."

Geoff Johns on 52

by RAY SIDMAN

*CBG: What's your involvement in **52**?*
Geoff Johns: I am one of four writers on the project including Grant Morrison, Greg Rucka, and Mark Waid — along with Keith Giffen and his insanity of laying out every single issue!
It's a monstrous challenge, and I think that's why we all wanted to do it: to work on a weekly series that takes place in real time and throughout the entire DC universe. I think we're going to see nearly every character along the way, spotlighting the majors and the minors.

That's the appeal to me: creating a great tapestry within the DC universe.

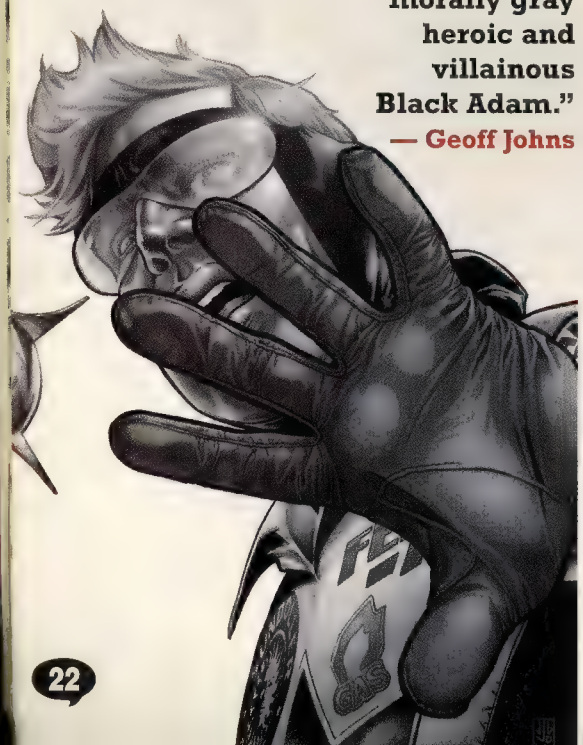
CBG: Who's your favorite character in this series?
Johns: I've really grown to love them all, but I have to admit I have a spot for the morally gray heroic and villainous Black Adam. To me, he's one of the most complex and fascinating characters I've had the pleasure of working with. His motives and actions are incredibly hard to predict. That being said, I've fallen in love with all of our leads. I believe every one of them has a journey that's going to take us across the DC universe in ways we've never seen before.

We aren't retelling old classics; we're moving the DC universe forward with an amalgam of characters from all eras.

CBG: What's your favorite event in this series?
Johns: You know, I think everyone sat down and thought they knew what their favorite character was before we began working on the series, but that's all changed.

The same can be said for the stories. There are touchstones I'm really excited about — but none I want to spoil here.

"I have to admit I have a spot for the morally gray heroic and villainous Black Adam."
— Geoff Johns



*CBG: Considering epic DC events past and present, how pivotal is **52** to the history of the DC universe?*
Johns: It's a year without Superman, Batman, and Wonder Woman: over 2,000 pages devoted to a spanning story weaving throughout the entire DC universe. Grant calls it the first super-hero comic-book novel.

Again, I'm thrilled to be a part of something that's never been done before.

*CBG: What do you hope readers get out of **52**?*
Johns: Everyone has his or her pull list, and there are those weeks where you shrug at what's coming out.

We want to negate the "boring" week and give you enjoyment every Wednesday for a year. We want this book to be at the top of people's reading lists and we're working hard to make sure that happens.

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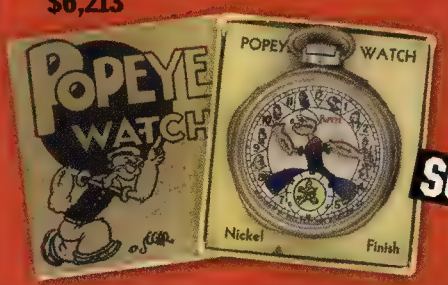

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REALIZING THE AMERICAN DREAM... OR NIGHTMARE

Mike Mackey's *Liberality for All*

What is *Liberality for All*? "It's a satirical look at liberalism," Mackey summarized.

by **RAY SIDMAN**

Imagine a world with President Al Gore and Vice President Michael Moore. Fast-forward 19 years ... to a time when G. Gordon Liddy, Oliver North, and Sean Hannity battle the society headed by President Chelsea Clinton. This is the world of *Liberality for All*, the right-wing comic-book mini-series written by Mike Mackey, published by his own ACC Studios.

Imagine a world with President Al Gore and Vice President Michael Moore. Fast-forward 19 years ... to a time when G. Gordon Liddy, Oliver North, and Sean Hannity battle the society headed by President Chelsea Clinton. This is the world of *Liberality for All*, the right-wing comic-book mini-series written by Mike Mackey, published by his own ACC Studios.

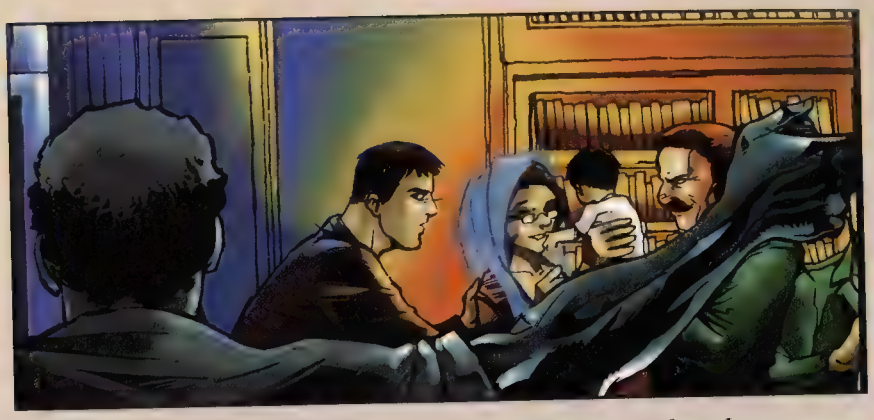
During a radio interview with G. Gordon Liddy — who, since reading the comic book, told ***CBG*** he has become a staunch supporter — Mackey explained the inspiration behind *Liberality for All*: "It's pretty much a response to hearing the concept of the anti-war liberals that have no solution for the problems in today's world and object to everything that George Bush, our president — our great president — has done. This comic book is the result. It's a liberal utopia and a conservative nightmare all at the same time.

"It's not exactly child's play."

Mackey spoke to ***CBG*** about the series, illustrated by artist Donny Lin, and the designs behind its creation.

When the idea occurred to him, he said, he felt it would be fun and would fall into a good marketing niche. "There was really nothing like that that had been done that was geared toward a particular demographic." The writer

Images ©2006 ACC Studios



said he wasn't sure if he'd call himself passionate about politics, though he intended for his book to not shy away from hot topics. "Politics was the backbone of this series, and it hits politics head-on instead of it subtly being there as an indoctrination kind of thing. It's overt, everyone knows what they're getting, and I'm not disguising this as a documentary or something."

As for his own political views, he said, "I've been traditionally conservative most of my personal life. I'm not gonna tell anybody else what to do. I don't mind if you're smoking pot in your basement or whatever — it's none of my business — but don't get in your car and drive into me.

"I'm all about people's personal freedoms."

With this last statement, he added that the strongest attacks he has received in response to the book have been from left-wing people who tout freedom of speech. He said he finds it odd that people are so willing and wanting to talk about religion and politics, yet those two topics have become taboo. "I find it amazing. Why shouldn't we discuss them? Everybody's interested in them. People are so diametrically opposed, and I guess that's what drives me to it. No matter what side you're on, you sit there and honestly say, 'How can that person think that?'"

Nonetheless, he reiterated his support of people's freedom to choose and of speech, regardless of whether it opposes his point of view. "I don't care what somebody else's opinion is and I support their opinion. I just think that, if someone's going to be fighting to protect whatever the right is — abortion or whatever — don't take away my right to own a gun." He said he has seen stereotyping of conservatives in the media as "racists, bigots, and homophobes," and, of the many conservatives he knows, none is like that.

On the flip side, he said he understood the

As parodies, Mackey made the fictional versions of the actual people exaggerated.

THE G-MAN SPEAKS

G. Gordon Liddy, also known as G-Man, talked to ***CBG*** about his views on *Liberality for All*, as well as about his background as a comic-book reader.

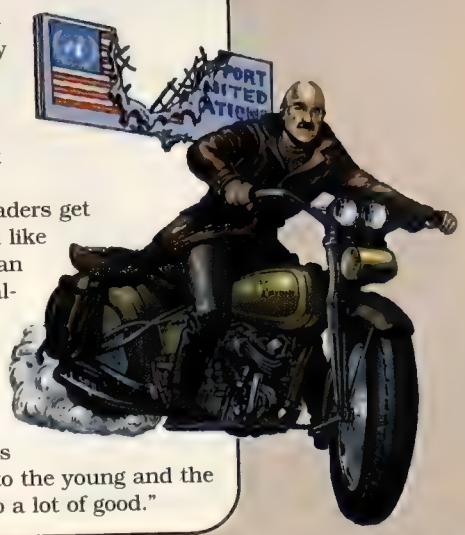
Liddy said that, when he was a child in the 1930s and 1940s, reading comics was one of his hobbies — and one he was proud of, then and now. In fact, he wished he still had all the old comics, including early issues of *Superman* and *Flash*. "Forget winning the lottery. If I still had those things, I could retire."

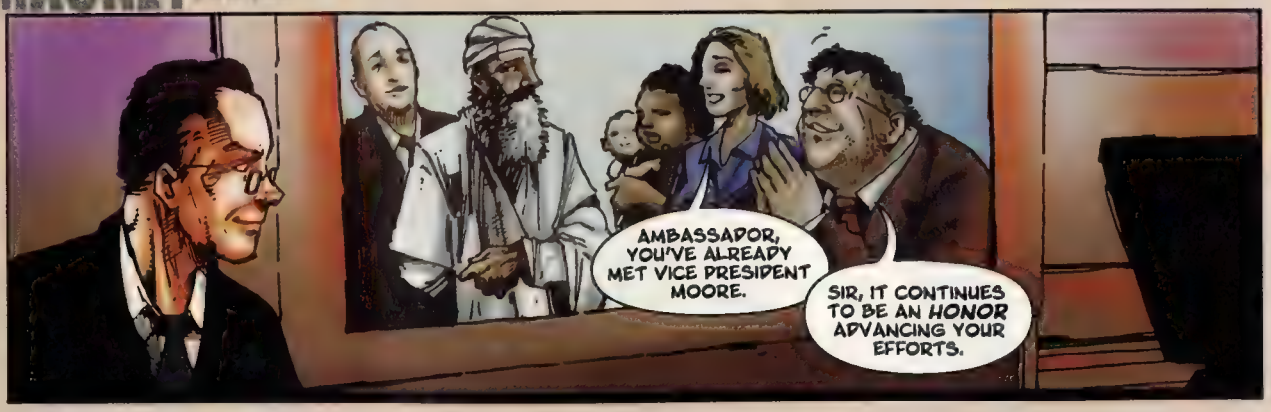
He commented that, then, comics were viewed by society differently from the way they are now, because they were new. "Everybody's parents were very leery of them," he said, "afraid that they might warp our minds, that they might cause us not to read real books, so the parents would discourage the kids from comic books because it was like pop culture. That gave it the lure of the forbidden, so, with our little dimes, we would buy them and read them and pass them around."

On *Liberality*, he commented that he enjoyed Mackey's writing as well as the art by Donny Lin and Larry Elmore. Moreover, he shared the political ideologies presented in the comic. "I'm a conservative and it's coming from the conservative perspective, so I like it politically."

Asked whether he considered the book primarily entertaining or informative, he replied, "That's a really good question. I'd say that it's a 50/50 split between the two."

What does he hope readers get from *Liberality*? "What I'd like for them to get is sort of an inoculation against liberalism. There's so much of that in the mainstream media — which is really cultural Marxism — anything to counterbalance that is good, and, as much as comics appeal to the young and the impressionable, it can do a lot of good."





appeal of the liberal perspective and acknowledged that many political fronts are tricky to handle. "I think it's easier to be a liberal: Nobody wants a war. Who the hell wants a war? What do you do with Iran? I guess it comes down to the ticking-time-bomb scenario: You got Iran here, and it's going to take five years for a U.N. resolution, and they can build an atomic bomb in one — we've got a problem."

"I hope that people can appreciate it as something meant to be satirical and at the same time ask serious questions."
— Mike Mackey

What is *Liberality for All*? "It's a satirical look at liberalism," Mackey summarized. He said that the only way to produce it was to make its conservative side a parody. So it involved characterizing Watergate alum G. Gordon Liddy, Iran-Contra's Oliver North, and talk-show host Sean Hannity along with — to a lesser degree — people like filmmaker Michael Moore and numerous politicians. He said his choices didn't go unnoticed. "To some left-leaning folks, picking Oliver North and G. Gordon Liddy was like picking Stalin and Hitler."

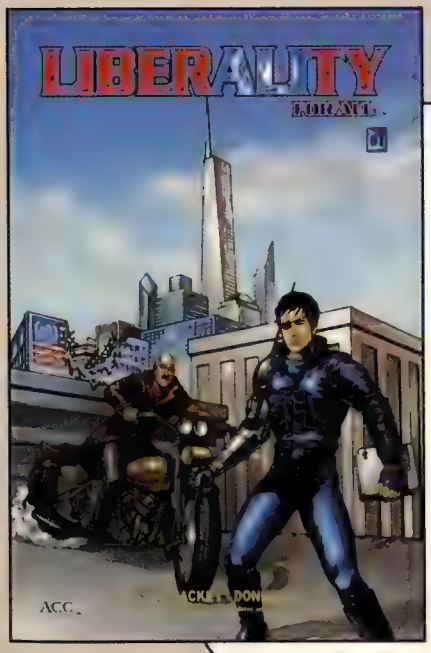
As parodies, Mackey made the fictional versions of the actual people exaggerated. He said he'd made Liddy darker and more mysterious than in real life. Nevertheless, he said, both Liddy and Hannity have responded positively — and, in fact, have had Mackey on their radio talk shows multiple times.

The writer said that, early on, he'd heard concern from friends regarding the possibility of lawsuits from some of the individuals fictionalized in his story. Though he said he hadn't been concerned himself, he spoke to lawyers about the situation. "This is a satire, so it's more along the lines of a *Mad* magazine version of something," he said. "I'm certainly comfortable with it. In the story, characters are really metaphors." One example of this is the blind Oliver North: "He'd rather be blind than see it the way it is."

Ultimately, said Mackey, the book boiled down to President Bush's handling of "the war on terror": "I'm comfortable with the way President Bush is handling the war in Iraq and the war on terror in general. The question put forth in the book is: If not the way that's going on now, then what's your solution?"

He told ***CBG***, "I hope that people can appreciate it as something meant to be satirical and at the same time ask serious questions. I hope people look into it enough to look for metaphors and see that I'm trying to tell a story." Thus far, people have been reacting the way he said he'd expected. "Conservative people love it. Liberal people hate it and have been e-mailing me their liberal perspectives."

When it comes to politics and the comics industry, Mackey contended that, in general, there's a "subtle lib-



ELMORE'S MORES

It turns out that artist Larry Elmore may have bitten off more than he'd wanted when he agreed to do a cover for *Liberality for All* #1 at the request of his friend, writer Mike Mackey.

As Mackey told ***CBG***, Elmore received no small amount of backlash for that cover. Mackey said that Elmore is libertarian, not conservative, and, "said he hadn't received this much flak since *Dungeons & Dragons* was blamed for Satanism." (Elmore has illustrated many *D&D* projects.)

"You would not believe the flak that Larry got." Laughing, he added, "Poor Larry."

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eral tendency toward things." He did Web searches to compare what's out there in terms of liberal and conservative comics and told ***CBG*** the results pointed much more strongly toward liberal. "I've been told by people who have read my book that's it's nice to have something else out there, something with a conservative slant."

He recommended an article titled "The Betrayal of Captain America" by Michael Medved and Michael Lackner, which directly addresses the issue of liberalism in comics.

Mackey also said he hasn't shied away from controversy.

Mackey also said he hasn't shied away from controversy. In #2, Muslim extremists set out to kill conservative talk-show hosts. They slay Rush Limbaugh, though Hannity survives a separate attack. "They try to kill Liddy, but he's packing heat, so ..." After escaping, Liddy interrogates one of his Muslim attackers by putting a butchered pig on him. "I don't know," said Mackey, "What part will they be offended by: that a Muslim terrorist blows up and kills a Muslim woman and children [in the attack on Hannity], or that pig blood is heaved on a terrorist trying to kill somebody. Which part is going to outrage them?"

Of his decision to include both in the issue, Mackey said, "We're on the cutting edge of upsetting people."

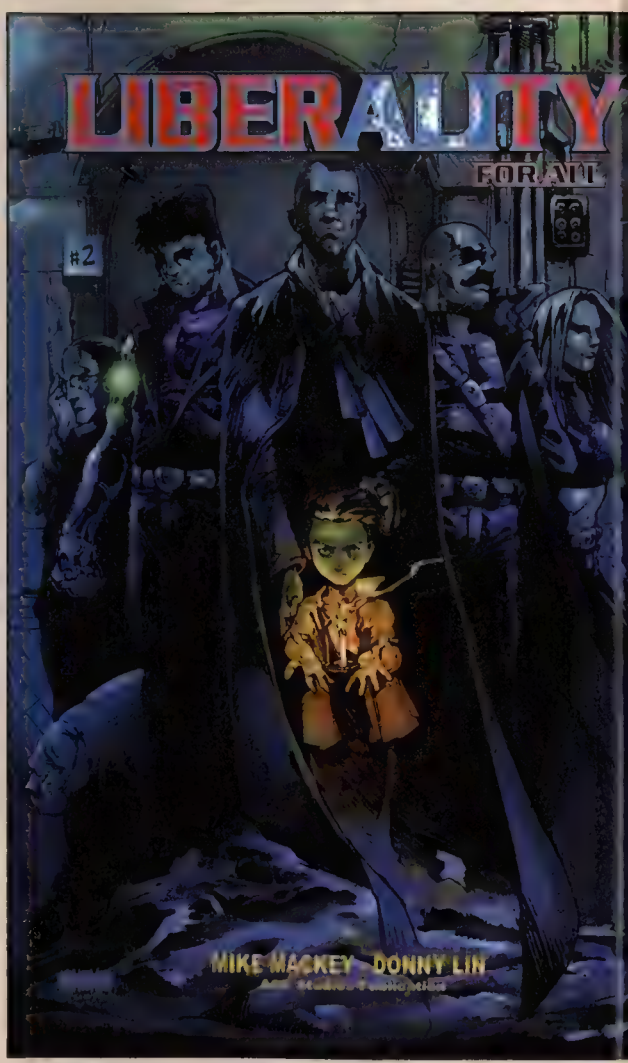
Whatever the selling point, Mackey said he is pleased with sales. He said the initial 12,000-copy print run of #1 had had more than half sold as of early February, with most of those distributed via the direct market instead of wholesale through his own firm.

Will there be another *Liberality for All* series? "Potentially. You should always leave threads for some follow-up stories."

Mackey said he has a pragmatic approach to managing his series, and it has nothing to do with sacrificing all in the name of getting a message across: "The first accomplishment of any book is to pay for your next one."

When asked whether he considered the series primarily informative or entertaining, he chose the latter, but added that readers might not see it that way. "You can do both at the same time," he added, "I want to say, 'inform,' but then I feel I'm coming off more serious than the book is supposed to be. I mean, Michael Moore is vice president.

"No matter what I want to do, I think what I'm coming off as doing is trying to inform with the satire and parody."



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CBG PREVIEW: Wolverine: Origins

Spinning directly out of the "Origins and Endings" story arc currently concluding in *Wolverine* #40 comes the new Wolverine monthly title — *Wolverine: Origins*.

After regaining all of his memories in the aftermath of "House of M," Wolverine's quest for more answers has already led to confrontation and revelations. But those don't even come close to the revelations about Wolverine's past that writer Daniel Way has planned in *Wolverine: Origins*.

Way said he has thoroughly researched the entire comics history of Wolverine and has found that his life seems to follow in the same cycle. Way is now looking forward to showing why Logan keeps falling into this cycle of losing the women he has loved and the constant tug-of-war between man and beast that he always struggled with.

Don't expect Wolverine's entire history to be wrapped up in one tidy little origin, though. Logan's past dates back more than 100 years and takes place all over the world including Japan and Canada. Also, while Logan may have all of his memories, he still has to sort out which are real and which have been implanted.

Wolverine: Origins #1 is scheduled to ship April 19 and retails for $2.99. Written by Daniel Way, the series is pencilled by Steve Dillon and has a cover by Joe Quesada and a variant cover by Michael Turner.

Wolverine: Origins pages © 2006 Marvel Characters, Inc.

S-SIR...?
NEGATIVE IMPACT, SIR.
"THE MISSILE APPEARS TO HAVE MALFUNCTIONED."

..WHAT?
SIR! THIS...THIS IS UNBELIEVABLE!
THE PRESIDENT IS CLEAR, SIR--HE'S IN HIS MOTORCADE, HEADING SOUTH!
SHUT THE @$%# UP!

A...WARNING? A SHOW OF FORCE?
WHAT IS HE...?
HOW *COULD* HE...?
COLONEL DUGAN, SIR? A *NUKE SQUAD* HAS BEEN DEPLOYED TO DISMANTLE THE MISSILE. E.T.A. *TWENTY-TWO MINUTES.*
ALL S.H.I.E.L.D. PERSONNEL ARE BEING PULLED BACK FROM THE SITE AND ARE CORDONING OFF THE AREA.
SON OF A...
HE GOT US *AGAIN.*
SIR...?
WHAT DO YOU *MEAN?*

"WHAT I MEAN IS..."
H-HELLO...?
IS ANYONE STILL--
"...THE PRESIDENT WASN'T THE TARGET."
IT'S JUST YOU AN' ME, DARLIN'...

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The top five vote-getters from the nominating round for fans' favorites of 2005 (only material with a 2005 cover date is eligible for consideration) on **CBGXtra.com** are as follows:

Favorite Comic-Book Editor:
- ❒ Axel Alonso
- ❒ Tom Brevoort
- ❒ Dan DiDio
- ❒ Joe Quesada
- ❒ Stephen Wacker

Favorite Comic-Book Writer:
- ❒ Brian Michael Bendis
- ❒ Ed Brubaker
- ❒ Peter David
- ❒ Geoff Johns
- ❒ Brian K. Vaughan

Favorite Comic-Book Penciller:
- ❒ John Cassaday
- ❒ Bryan Hitch
- ❒ Phil Jimenez
- ❒ Jim Lee
- ❒ George Pérez

Favorite Comic-Book Inker:
- ❒ Terry Austin
- ❒ Andy Lanning
- ❒ Danny Miki
- ❒ Jimmy Palmiotti
- ❒ Scott Williams

Favorite Comic-Book Colorist:
- ❒ Bill Crabtree
- ❒ Laura Martin
- ❒ Eva Hopkins
- ❒ Alex Sinclair
- ❒ Dave Stewart

Favorite Comic-Book Letterer:
- ❒ Chris Eliopoulos
- ❒ Todd Klein
- ❒ Nick J. Napolitano
- ❒ Richard Starkings and Comicraft
- ❒ John Workman

Favorite Comic-Book Cover Artist:
- ❒ John Cassady
- ❒ Jim Lee
- ❒ Joseph Michael Linsner
- ❒ George Pérez
- ❒ Alex Ross

Favorite Comic-Book Story:
- ❒ "House of M" — *House of M* #1-8 (Marvel)
- ❒ "Infinite Crisis" — *Infinite Crisis* #1 (DC)
- ❒ "Return to the Homelands" — *Fables* #36-41 (DC/Vertigo)
- ❒ "Villains United" — *Villains United* #1-6 (DC)
- ❒ "The Winter Soldier" — *Captain America* (5th series) #8-12 (Marvel)

Favorite Comic Book:
- ❒ *Fables* (DC/Vertigo)
- ❒ *Infinite Crisis* (DC)
- ❒ *JSA* (DC)
- ❒ *New Avengers* (Marvel)
- ❒ *Y: The Last Man* (DC/Vertigo)

Favorite Original Graphic Novel or Album (not reprint collection):
- ❒ *The Fountain* (DC/Vertigo)
- ❒ *The Plot: The Secret Story of the Protocols of the Elders of Zion* (W.W. Norton)
- ❒ *The Quitter* (DC/Vertigo)
- ❒ *Top 10: The Forty-Niners* (DC/ABC)
- ❒ *Tricked* (Top Shelf)

Favorite Comic-Book Character:
- ❒ Batman
- ❒ Captain America
- ❒ Spider-Man
- ❒ Superman
- ❒ Wolverine

Favorite Comic-Book Publishing Company:
- ❒ Archie
- ❒ Dark Horse
- ❒ DC
- ❒ Image
- ❒ Marvel

CBG FAN AWARDS

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Optional information

1. Which of the following best describes you?
   - ❒ Comic-book collector
   - ❒ Comic-book reader
   - ❒ Comic-book retailer
   - ❒ Other industry professional
2. Are you: ❒ Male ❒ Female
3. What is your age?_____years old
4. Do you have access to the Internet? ❒ Yes ❒ No

Please turn over for more optional survey questions.

VOTING INFORMATION

You must use this form to vote by mail. No photocopies or faxed ballots will be accepted. If you vote more than once, all your votes will be discarded. Vote only in the categories you want, leaving blank any you don't wish to vote in. Ballots must be received by May 30, 2006, to be included in the voting. Winners will be announced in ***CBG*** #1621.

SOUND OFF!

What was your first issue of ***Comics Buyer's Guide***?

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How long does it take you to read an issue of ***CBG***?

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Who are your five favorite current CBG writers?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

Have you ever made a new comic-book purchase based on a ***CBG*** review?
❒ Yes ❒ No

About how many comics do you have in your collection?

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How do you store most of your comics?
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Are you familiar with ***CBGXtra.com***? ❒ Yes ❒ No
If yes, have you posted on the site? ❒ Yes ❒ No

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❒ Always read
❒ Sometimes read
❒ Never read

Nostalgia Features
❒ Always read
❒ Sometimes read
❒ Never read

Opinion Columns
❒ Always read
❒ Sometimes read
❒ Never read

Price Guide
❒ Always read
❒ Sometimes read
❒ Never read

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❒ Always read
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❒ Never read

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❒ Always read
❒ Sometimes read
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Of which of the above features would you most like to see more? _____

_____

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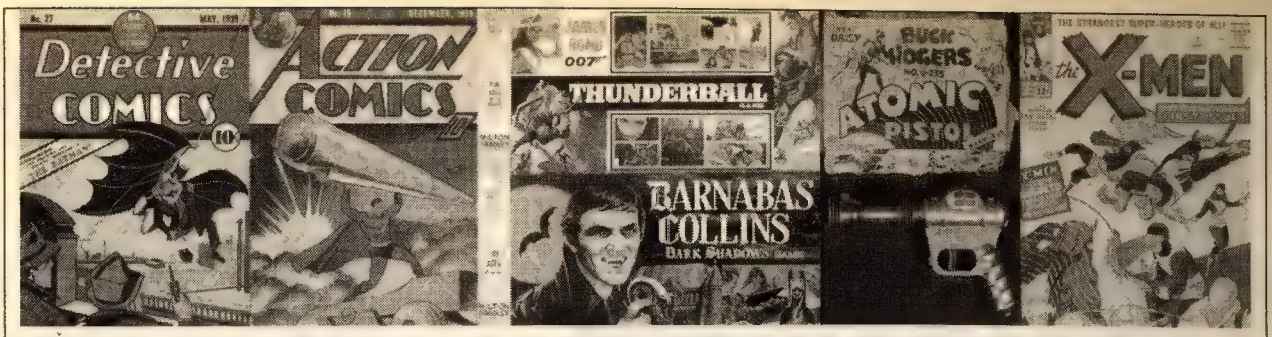

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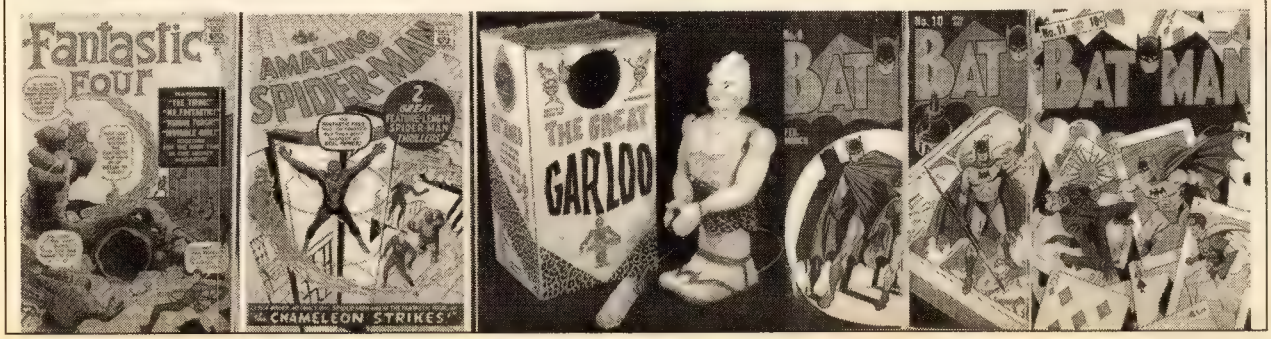


The irrepressible KATY KEENE

by **MICHELLE NOLAN**

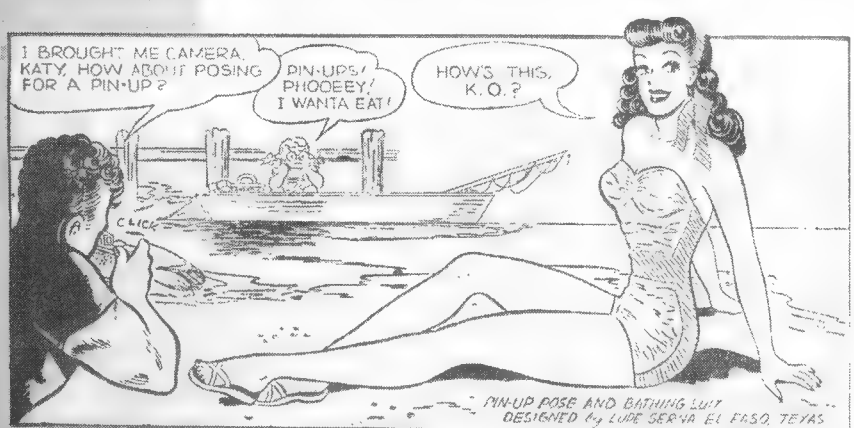
Bill Woggon drew the views of Katy above for his National Cartoonists Society bio.

Experienced collectors of Golden Age comics are well aware which series demand the closest inspection, even by collectors who aren't especially condition-conscious. In fact, locating the likes of even "Very Good" complete issues of *Katy Keene* isn't easy. One of the toughest challenges in the entire field of comics collecting would be to put together a Near Mint 100-issue set of *Katy Keene* #1-62 and the other 38 Katy annuals and specials issued from 1949 to 1961.

Paper dolls and the most beautiful, imaginative fashions ever to appear in comics — many the result of designs suggested by readers — were constantly cut and traced. They were read, re-read, and *re*-re-read. These were among the most beloved comic books of an era when girls often read comics with as much enthusiasm as boys. I'm not sure if the word "interactive" was used in the 1940s and '50s, but Katy comics were definitely interactive. Creator Bill Woggon and his studio staff encouraged and used thousands of designs submitted by readers. It wasn't uncommon to hear fashion designers of the 1960s and later, along with women of all ages, recall how Katy inspired them while growing up.

The original readers are all now in their 50s or older. But ask any stylish woman "of a certain age" about Katy Keene, and chances are you'll get a smile, a giggle, and a whole lot of fond memories of a title that simply exuded fun. Katy also appeared in numerous issues of *Laugh*, *Pep*, *Wilbur*, and *Suzie* comics over a 17-year period.

Below, Katy appears in a panel in *Laugh* #24 (Dec 47).



In fact, Katy, one of the comic-book icons of the 1950s, made an inauspicious debut in a seemingly unlikely place: *Wilbur Comics* #5 (Sum 45), published by MLJ Comics (the predecessor to the Archie Series). *Wilbur*, a quarterly title until 1947, was never more than a second-string version of Archie and operated in a different universe. Yet Katy was to become one of the most popular characters during the era of

10¢ Archie Series titles and 25¢ giants.

"When Kate walks down the beach," read the splash-page introduction to her first story, "you'd think you were in a zoo full of wolves by the sound of the howling — Katy has enough boy friends to make a regiment and has more requests for pin-ups than Betty Gable or Tana Lurner."

(Well, we all knew whom Woggon meant.)

The suggestive first panel of Katy's debut looked like something out of Bill Ward, not Bill Woggon, showing Katy from behind, in high heels and light blue underwear, bending over to get out of a dress. This certainly wouldn't have come close to passing the Comics Code Authority 10 years later! The rest of the story, though, was as innocent as innocent could be, while "Sis" — Katy's kid sister later known as "The Candy Kid" — cajoled payoffs in soda pop and sweets to stay away from attentive fellows.

Katy seemingly was an unlikely candidate for success as a backup feature in what was then an obscure quarterly teen humor title, yet she was different enough to click with readers who liked fun combined with fashion. When MLJ's *Black Hood* title was converted to *Laugh Comics* with #20 (Fal 46), Katy was there from the start as a backup to Archie & Co. The Fashion Queen also began long runs as a backup in *Suzie Comics* #56 (Apr 47) and *Pep Comics* #60 (Mar 47), which also included the last Golden Age appearance of The Black Hood. Katy, in fact, appeared in six issues of *Pep* with The Shield, MLJ's last super-hero.

How many Golden Age characters appeared as backups in four different titles in the 1940s without ever gracing a cover? Katy held that distinctive status until she was finally given her own title with *Katy Keene* #1, an undated 1949 issue perhaps intended as an experimental one-shot. Even then, it was not until #5 (Mar 52) that Katy began to appear quarterly and not until a year later that she earned bi-monthly status. Her title continued through #62 (Oct 1961), her final issue.

The themes in Katy's light-hearted stories often reflected pop culture and current events, such as the spectacular space-themed issue, #40 (May 58), inspired by the Soviet Union's launching of the first Earth satellite, Sputnik, on Oct. 4, 1957. Katy was plugged as "Sputacular" and "out of this world in a galaxy of heavenly fashion pin-ups for you by Bill Woggon." Little pink (!) moon men were shown ogling the long-lashed movie star on the splash page! *Katy Keene Pin-Up Parade* #13 (Win 60-61), a 25¢ giant, took Katy to Squaw Valley, site of the 1960 Winter Olympics.

By 1954, Katy had become so popular — and so many readers were mailing in designs for dresses, swimsuits, shoes, jewelry, and even the likes of cars, furniture and rocket ships — that Archie published the 100-page *Katy Keene Annual* #1 (1954-55). Hundreds of names of readers were included in this special, which included an inside cover photo of Bill Woggon in his "cartoon studio" at Woggon Wheels Ranch in Santa Barbara, Calif. All of Katy's gang celebrated her successes with her, including studly beaus K.O. Kelly and Randy Von Ronson, rival Gloria Grandbilt, and plumpish loyal friend Bertha.

The first annual unleashed a flood of Katy specials, including *Pin-Up Parade* #1-15, *Fashion Book* #1-2, #11-23, *Spectacular* #1, *Glamor* #1, *Charm* #1, and two issues of *Holiday Fun* in the *Archie Giant Series* — #7 and #12. There was even a *Katy Keene 3-D* one-shot in 1953 during the height of the short-lived 3-D craze. Altogether, Katy appeared in well over 300 issues of the Archie Series as either star or backup. Not many characters had that much exposure during the 10¢ era of comics. Not even the prolific Woggon could do all the work himself, though, and was assisted by Hazel Marten and Cassie Bill, among others.

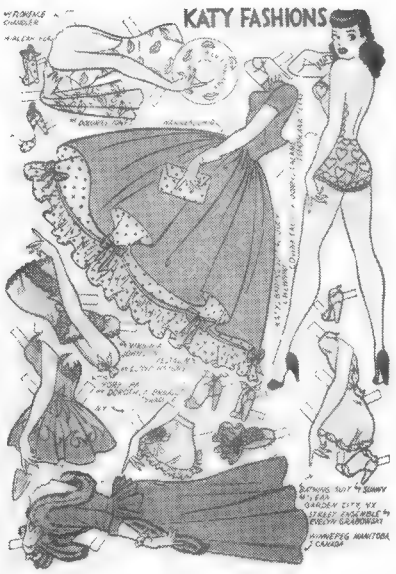
A little over two decades after what seemed like Katy's last bow in the winter of 1961-62, she made a sudden return. Many readers were startled when they saw *Katy Keene Special* #1 (Sep 83), which was sometimes labeled "Archie Romance Series" and became simply *Katy Keene* with #8. The appealing title apparently never had a circulation of more than 30,000 issues — less than 10% of the title's height of popularity in the 1950s — and ran 33 issues through 1990, with much of the writing and art done by John Lucas and the late, much-missed Barb Rausch, who was a frequent contributor to Katy's original line. Katy also appeared in 10 digest-sized issues through 1990 and in a few other Archie titles.

It's difficult to believe the new Katy Keene could — in a sense — be the original Katy's granddaughter! But Katy would still be the most stylish of grandmothers.

Bill Woggon was featured in the NCS Album in 1966.

Ads drew Katy fans to her feature in other Archie titles.

The STILL irrepressible KATY KEENE



In the '80s, *Katy Keene Special* went from fashion displays to simple stories in its 7-issue run.

by MAGGIE THOMPSON

While Katy Keene came back for a time in the 1980s (see Michelle Nolan's article on pages 36-37), Katy and her type of story have largely been absent for some time from the comic-book scene, and even some long-time comic-book readers have never heard of the fashion plate that inspired the career choices of several fashion designers. Although her mid-'80s return began with reader designs, by #6 (Oct 84), her adventures were being written by Susan Berkley, pencilled by Hy Eisman, and inked by Vince Colletta — and reader credits were gone.

But Archie Comics tested the waters in 2005 with its Free Comic Book Day release, bringing Katy to the world of Betty and Veronica in a story scripted and pencilled by Dan Parent and inked by Jim Amash.

Now, she's about to try out a variety of styles in upcoming adventures.

Writer-artist Andrew Pepoy's first Katy Keene story will appear in *Archie & Friends* #101, scheduled for release in May, and follow-ups will appear in #102 and #103. Moreover, two more stories, a six-pager (focusing on Katy recording her first album) and a 10-pager (Katy, Gloria, Rodney, and a German super-model on a photo-shoot in a South American country, Rodney's mother's homeland), have been approved. There's Katy coverage online at *www.archiecomics.com* — and fans can let the company know whether they'd like to see more.

Pepoy told ***CBG***, "I'm really excited about working on *Katy Keene*. It was my mom's favorite as a kid, so it's an extra-good reason for me as well to be enjoying it, but I'm just having a good time doing it: writing and drawing some good fun comics."

Returning to the concept will be fan participation — and even Katy's sister. Once just called "Sis" and appearing as a little girl, the character in the new tales will be high-school co-ed MacKenzie.

A component of the affection readers had for the title in the past was the ability to contribute to the "look" of its characters. Pepoy said, "I *do* want lots of ideas for outfits for Katy and MacKenzie." In the second story, Katy will be wearing 19 different outfits in the course of six pages; MacKenzie has roughly a dozen in the third. "I need suggestions of anything for Katy, Mac, Gloria Gold, Rodney

Watch for Katy in *Archie and Friends*:

#101 (on sale in May) "Katy Keene"
#102 (on sale in July) "Paparazzi Problem"
#103 (on sale in August) "Love in Blum"

VanRonson, KO Kirby, *etc.*: clothes, accessories, cars, rooms, story suggestions, pin-up ideas, anything."

He said, "I'm trying to keep the spirit of what made Katy in the '40s, '50s, and '60s such a special thing — but trying to make it new and interesting and updating it only where need be to keep it interesting and fun for a new and modern audience."

Editor Mike Pellerito responded to ***CBG***'s question of why Archie is bringing Katy back now, "Simple: for fun."

He continued, "Archie Comics has been producing great comics for kids of all ages for 65 years. Every year, Archie Comics produces an all-new, original material comic for Free Comic Book Day. This year we have the pop group The Veronicas; last year it was Katy Keene.

"When Archie brought back Katy, we received a really positive response from the fans. At the same time, Andrew and I were putting our pitch together for her. The way Katy is being handled this time around is more similar to our successful handling of the manga-styled *Sabrina the Teenage Witch*, *Josie and the Pussycats*, the long-running *Sonic the Hedgehog*, and the new *Sonic X* comics. We are targeting our Archie readers who are getting older and are looking to have stories that reflect that, while still being a great story that their kid brother or sister could read."

And, as a bonus, readers can once again contribute by designing what will be shown. "Anyone who is looking for fun, romance, and excitement," Pellerito concluded, "should be sure not to miss Archie Comics' new adventures of Katy Keene."

Have designs for Katy or her friends?

The *www.archiecomics.com* website is one submission point. Designs can also go via Postal Service to:

Katy Keene
c/o Archie Comic Publications, Inc.
325 Fayette Ave.
Mamaroneck, NY 10543

In 2006, Andrew Pepoy will bring Katy back from her tryout in 2005's Free Comic Book Day reintroduction (left and below).

The Blurbs!

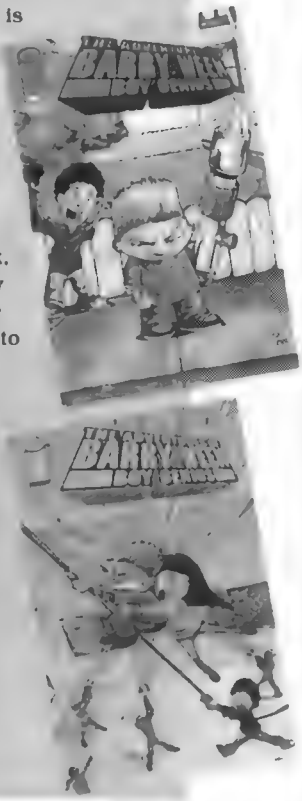
by **RAY SIDMAN**

Five words: "Barry Ween" and "in the works"

Any longtime fan of Judd Winick knows Barry Ween. Odds are, they worship Barry Ween. He is arguably *the* hilariously quotable phenom of the Winick canon — no small feat, considering the expanse of Winick's work. However, after three comic-book series written and drawn by Winick (between 1999 and 2002) about this wunderkind and his friends, Winick backburnered him due to a plethora of projects and obligations including writing for numerous major DC Comics' series and, of course, *The Life and Times of Juniper Lee* at Cartoon Network. But now, fans of Barry can smile again ... The Man (that would be Judd) has been thinking about his 11-year-old foul-mouthed genius (that would be Barry), and thinking hard. Quoth Winick: "Barry Ween is very much in the works."

"We are actually kicking around many, many ideas about Barry Ween right now," said Winick, "including a lot of stuff that would be on the Web. It would allow me a lot of control, doing Barry Ween shorts where nobody would be questioning the content." The content — a large percentage containing far more than seven words one can never say on television — has posed a roadblock to past notions of developing the character for animation. Winick said he hopes to move forward with plans within the year.

As for another comic-book foray for Barry & Co.? Winick said he's focusing on these other plans for now because — as he has often said — Barry Ween comic books are massively time-consuming, but he commented that ultimately he will do another Barry comic. "The day will come when I will absolutely do another because I will have to, because I can't not."



Images © Image Comics and Oni Press

True Story moves — swear to God

The Eisner Award-nominated title *True Story, Swear to God* by Tom Beland will move to Image Comics with #18, according to the writer-artist. Issue #17 will be the final one for the series under Beland's label Clib's Boy Comics.

The autobiographical series (which has garnered a loyal fan following as well as multiple award nominations) tells the ongoing story of Chicago native Beland's relationship with Puerto Rican Lily García.

Images © Clib's Boy Comics

Dead@17 goes monthly

The popular title *Dead@17* will go monthly, publisher Viper Comics has announced. After a handful of limited series by its creator, Josh Howard, the title will go monthly starting in August.

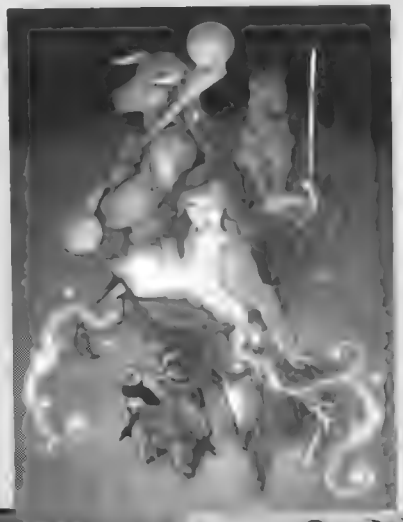
Fans can get a new *Dead@17* story prior to that, however, since a 10-page story appears in the Viper anthology that will be available as part of Free Comic Book Day May 6. Howard said the new pages appearing in the anthology are not from the upcoming series; rather, it's an introduction to the world of *Dead@17*. As Howard put it, "It's the closest thing you can get to a comic-book trailer."

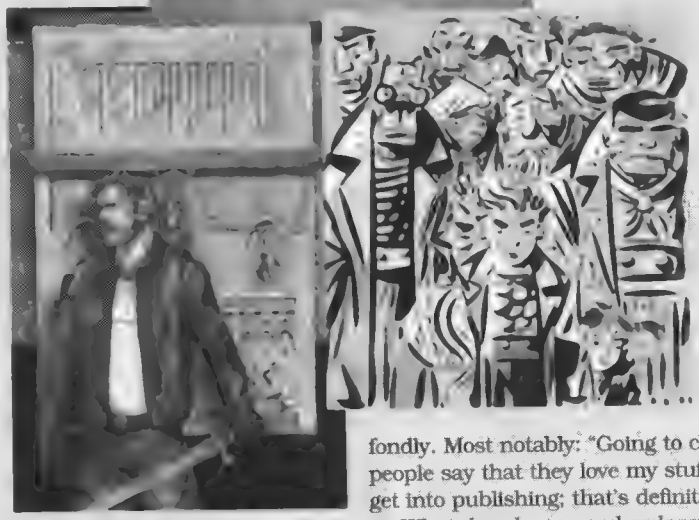
Fortier talks frankly about Speakeasy

Adam Fortier, founder and president of the recently defunct Speakeasy Comics, talked with **CBG** about what went wrong, eventually causing the company to close its doors — though not, however, bringing it to bankruptcy, a fate few other failed comics publishers avoid. At its peak, the company was home to several fan-favorite titles: *Atomika*, *The Grimoire*, *Beowulf*, *Of Bitter Souls*, *Rocketo*, *Ravenous*, and *Phantom Jack*. Several of the series have found or are seeking new publishing homes.

The company, started in November 2004, peaked around June or July 2005, commented Fortier, adding that things really went downhill at the end of last year. "December is when it really got a lot tougher. Sales weren't really where we wanted them to be. There was still a goal and everything, but then a number of circumstances happened — not just one thing, some bigger than others — that caused us just not to be able to continue."

When asked what caused the slide and eventual closure, Fortier ascribed it to a change in the way of conducting business, involving "some stuff to happen that never happened, and that was pretty big."





Images © Speakeasy Comics

During an interview with **CBG** last year (**CBG** #1609, page 49), Fortier had said he wanted Speakeasy to start small, build slowly but steadily, and then have 20 monthly books by January 2006. Fortier said he'd stuck to the plan, but changes in the market caused problems. "You ask any of the publishers — this became a different industry to be in this year: going in one direction, then it started to go in another." He said that keeping up with changes is hard. "By the time you've made your plans, implemented your plans, and gotten responses to your plans, you're talking six months."

The fact that the publisher avoided bankruptcy is no small feat. Fortier said that, ultimately, the company didn't make any money, but he closed the doors before it fell into the red. "This was a situation where we pulled the plug because we didn't want to go in the direction where we were no longer confident that we would be able to take it. And, yeah, to a large extent, we didn't want to owe people more money than we already did.

"I take that responsibility very seriously. Bankruptcy is something that's not only very serious, it makes it so that you've really just got no hope, and I think as a person I would feel better to be able to say, 'You know what? We closed the doors, it didn't work, we lost money, but we didn't run away.' "

Still, there are outstanding financial matters he's handling post-closure. "We're dealing with all that stuff right now, trying to make it as good as possible for people — everything on our end, everything on everybody else's end, and getting everybody to the point where they can move on with their lives. While this isn't a great experience for them right now, it becomes something that isn't going to have a serious detrimental effect."

There are aspects of being a publisher that he said he remembered fondly. Most notably: "Going to conventions and having people say that they love my stuff. That's often why people get into publishing; that's definitely why *I* was there."

What does he remember *least* fondly? Not surprisingly, "Closing."

He indicated that the stress of it all had left him soured on comics in general and he commented that he's not sure he'll return to comics, either as a reader or in any other capacity. "Will I be in comics? I don't know. I started not to like it, and that's just not a good place to be. I haven't picked up comic books in many, many months. It had already soured me.

"I don't really see me returning to comics publishing. I just don't know that I'd even be able to do it."

Speaking of *Phantom Jack* ...

As news of the demise of Speakeasy Comics keeps conversation interesting at the comic-book water cooler, one of the creators whose project was at the publisher spoke to **CBG** about his situation. Michael San Giacomo, creator of the character Phantom Jack, said the character's final limited series got the ax as a result of Speakeasy's closing its doors.

The three-issue *Phantom Jack: The Nowhere Man Agenda* had been due out later this year. No more. And that's not all. "Not only does this kill Phantom Jack just three issues before *I* was going to kill him," said San Giacomo, "but it also puts the kibosh on my *big* project, *Tales of the Starlight Drive-In*, which just this week is being lettered."

Image © Image Comics

Tales is a 216-page graphic novel with 26 stories covering a 50-year period at a drive-in theater, with the stories capable of being read separately or together to tell a larger tale.

San Giacomo said he planned to look for a new publisher for his projects.

Hammer paves road to Civil War

During a recent conference call, Marvel Comics' writer J.M. Straczynski and Marvel executives discussed the upcoming "Civil War," storyline, specifically the part dealing with The Fantastic Four — and Thor's hammer, Mjolnir.

The cover of *Fantastic Four* #536 (see below) shows what appears to be Mjolnir being hoisted by the gauntleted hand of Doom. A closer look at the final issue of *Thor* last year revealed a panel in which Thor yelled, "I come as your doom!"

The big question is whether Thor himself will return. The next big question is: How is Doom worthy of picking up Thor's hammer? Marvel Editor Tom Brevoort was tight-lipped about whether Thor would be back, though Straczynski explained a possible solution as to how the power-hungry Doom could pick up Mjolnir. Since Thor's death, the hammer has been traveling through the cosmos, and it turns out it breached the walls of Hell in doing so — and Straczynski said it allowed Doom to escape Hell. How this will all tie together — fans are encouraged to "wait and see," said Brevoort.

Replying to a question about whether The FF will stick together or be torn apart by the "Civil War," Straczynski said, "The team will fracture very early on." He added that there may be long-term consequences from this. Marvel has already announced the death of Sue Storm in the upcoming *Fantastic Four — A Death in the Family One-Shot* written by Karl Kesel.

What is "Civil War" all about? A political movement gains significant momentum to get super-powered individuals to register, much as a doctor, lawyer, or other professional must do in order to be allowed to practice some trades. This movement tears the super-hero community in two, with major players landing on both sides — and The FF will be caught up in it, as well.

Images ©2006 Marvel Characters Inc.

Superman Returns flies into PG-13

In its March 15 bulletin, the Motion Picture Association of America announced it has rated *Superman Returns* as PG-13. The reason given was "some intense action violence."

The Warner Bros. film directed by Bryan Singer is due in theaters June 30.

Hard Time hits hard times

At his blog (*www.stevegerber.com/sgblog*), *Hard Time* writer Steve Gerber announced the series will end with #7 of *Hard Time: Season Two* as a result of insufficient sales. The first series' outing had been a success, but it came to an end in spring 2005.

Gerber said, "I want to make one thing absolutely clear right now: I do not in any way blame DC for the book's failure, and neither should you. In fact, shortly after getting the unhappy news, I called both Paul Levitz and Dan DiDio to thank them for supporting the series as long as they did. They were proud of the book and wanted it to succeed."

Gerber said he and co-writer Mary Skrenes are finishing up the scripts for #6 and #7.

It's all about *Truth, Justin, and the American Way*

Truth, Justin, and the American Way is the new mini-series from Scott Kurtz (*PvP*) and Aaron Williams (*Nodwick*), due in April from Image Comics. The five-issue series takes place in the 1980s — and heavily uses that era as inspiration. Kurtz and Williams tell the story of Justin J. Cannell, who accidentally gains powers when he stumbles across a spacesuit. Hilarity and life complications ensue for the protagonist. The tale is drawn by Giuseppe Ferrario.

More information appears at *www.pvponline.com/justin*.

Image ©2006 Image Comics

Databank

New comics sales for February 2006

Diamond sales
Top comics *ordered* by retailers

Comics shops ordered more than **6.05 million comic books** from **Diamond Comic Distributors** in February, about 200,000 more than in the same month in 2005. Those comics were worth **$18.18 million**, up 8% from the same month in 2005.

Adding **all** comics, trade paperbacks, and magazines sold by Diamond, the total grows to **$28.64 million**, up 8% from the same month in 2005.

Orders shown below are **estimates:**

	Comic Book	Price	Publisher	Orders
1	Astonishing X-Men #13	$2.99	Marvel	140,600
2	New Avengers #16	$2.50	Marvel	121,400
3	Justice #4	$3.50	DC	110,400
4	Supergirl #4	$2.99	DC	104,700
5	Ultimate Wolverine Vs Hulk #2	$2.99	Marvel	97,300
6	Amazing Spider-Man #529	$2.50	Marvel	90,400
7	Green Lantern #8	$2.99	DC	89,200
8	Green Lantern #9	$2.99	DC	86,500
9	Supergirl #5	$3.99	DC	85,200
10	Uncanny X-Men #469	$2.50	Marvel	79,000
11	X-Men #182	$2.50	Marvel	78,600
12	X-Men #183	$2.50	Marvel	76,400
13	Ultimate Extinction #2	$2.99	Marvel	75,800
14	X-Men Deadly Genesis #4	$3.50	Marvel	74,600
15	JLA #125	$2.50	DC	74,300
16	Ultimate X-Men #67	$2.50	Marvel	72,700
17	Wolverine #39	$2.50	Marvel	72,200
18	Ultimate Spider-Man #90	$2.50	Marvel	71,400
19	Teen Titans #32	$2.50	DC	69,100
20	Ultimate Fantastic Four #27	$2.50	Marvel	67,900
21	Batman #650	$2.50	DC	66,400
22	Rann Thanagar War Infinite Crisis Sp	$4.99	DC	65,300
23	Superman #226	$2.50	DC	64,000
24	Sensational Spider-Man #23	$2.99	Marvel	59,000
25	X-Men 198 #2	$2.99	Marvel	58,500
26	Young Avengers #10 (Res)	$2.99	Marvel	56,300
27	Ghost Rider #6	$2.99	Marvel	55,800
28	JSA #82	$2.50	DC	54,200
29	Daredevil #82	$2.99	Marvel	53,000
30	Son of M #3	$2.99	Marvel	52,200
31	Action Comics #836	$2.50	DC	51,700
32	X-Factor #3	$2.99	Marvel	48,300
33	X-Men End Men & X-Men #2	$2.99	Marvel	47,400
34	Wonder Woman #226	$2.50	DC	45,700
35	New Excalibur #4	$2.99	Marvel	45,100
36	Fantastic Four #534	$2.99	Marvel	44,600
37	Captain America #14	$2.99	Marvel	44,000
38	Captain America #15	$2.99	Marvel	43,300
39	Outsiders #33	$2.50	DC	43,300
40	Fantastic Four #535	$2.99	Marvel	43,100
41	New X-Men #23	$2.99	Marvel	41,400
42	Marvel Zombies #3	$2.99	Marvel	41,100
43	Spider-Woman Origin #3	$2.99	Marvel	40,500
44	JSA Classified #8	$2.50	DC	39,600
45	Generation M #4	$2.99	Marvel	39,400
46	Sentry #5	$2.99	Marvel	39,200
47	Incredible Hulk #92	$2.99	Marvel	39,200
48	JSA Classified #9	$2.50	DC	39,100
49	Red Sonja #5	$2.99	Dynamic	38,800
50	JLA Classified #17	$2.99	DC	38,000

Source: *Diamond Comic Distributors, Comics & Games Retailer magazine*

The HEAT-meter
Top comics *sold* by retailers

Whereas the list on the left represents what comic books retailers **ordered and received**, the rankings below represent what retailers **said they sold**, in reports to ***CBG***. While not as exact as order data, this ranking shows those titles that are performing better in shops than their orders would indicate. **Marvel's *Sentinel Squad O*N*E* #1**, for example, came in 76th in orders for the month, but 39th in actual retailer sales.

Some titles listed below actually shipped the previous month but were still being reported as strong sellers.

1. New Avengers
2. Justice
3. Supergirl
4. Astonishing X-Men
5. Amazing Spider-Man
6. JLA
7. Green Lantern
8. X-Men: Deadly Genesis
9. Batman
10. Ultimate Wolverine vs Hulk
11. Superman
12. Teen Titans
13. Rann/Thanagar War IC Special
14. Wolverine
15. Action Comics
16. X-Men
17. Uncanny X-Men
18. Ultimate Extinction
19. Sensational Spider Man
20. JSA
21. Ghost Rider
22. Infinite Crisis
23. Ultimate Spider-Man
24. X-Men: The 198
25. Ultimate Fantastic Four
26. Marvel Zombies
27. Ultimate X-Men
28. Young Avengers
29. Detective Comics
30. Generation M
31. Son of M
32. X-Factor
33. All-Star Superman
34. Captain America
35. Wonder Woman
36. GLC: Recharge
37. JSA Classified
38. Fantastic Four
39. Sentinel Squad O*N*E
40. X-Men: End Men & X-Men
41. Adventures of Superman
42. Batman: Journey into Knight
43. Green Arrow
44. Red Sonja
45. Batman: Leg. ot Dark Knight
46. Daredevil
47. New Excalibur
48. Punisher
49. Legion of Super Heroes
50. Outsiders

Source: *Comics & Games Retailer magazine*

The scoreboard
Publisher market shares

The first two tables below break down retailer orders for the Top 300 comics sold by Diamond, exclusive of trade paperbacks.

The table on the right represents the share of all publications Diamond sold, capturing comics not in the Top 300, trade paperbacks, and magazines (whether or not they contain comics).

Share of Top 300 Comics (in units)		Share of Top 300 Comics (in dollars)		Share of ALL publications (in dollars)	
Publisher	Share	Publisher	Share	Publisher	Share
Marvel	49.60%	Marvel	48.35%	Marvel	39.56%
DC	36.29%	DC	35.94%	DC	32.67%
Dark Horse	2.91%	Dark Horse	2.94%	Dark Horse	4.61%
Image	2.73%	Image	2.83%	Image	3.36%
IDW	2.06%	IDW	2.61%	Tokyopop	2.86%
Dynamic	1.73%	Dynamic	1.80%	IDW	2.02%
Devil's Due	1.39%	Devil's Due	1.50%	Viz	1.97%
Bongo	0.63%	Bongo	0.64%	Wizard	1.58%
Archie	0.49%	Avatar	0.48%	Dynamic	1.23%
Avatar	0.41%	Gemstone	0.46%	Devil'sDue	1.10%

Source: *Diamond Comic Distributors, Comics & Games Retailer magazine*

For more on industry sales trends, visit the **Knowledge Base** forum at **www.cbgxtra.com**

COMICS IN YOUR FUTURE

Comics shipping information is taken from publisher and distributor solicitations and updates and is as accurate as possible at presstime. For weekly updates, visit the Shelf List forum at ***www.cbgxtra.com.***

ON SALE IN MAY 2006

:01 First Second
Deogratias: Tale of Rwanda GN, $16.95
Vampire Loves GN, $16.95

A Fine Line
Desert Peach: Pithed #31, $5.95
Stinz: Tribals One-Shot, $5.95

A. D. Vision
Cromartie High School Manga Vol. 6 TP, $10.99
Full Metal Panic: Overload Manga Vol. 5 TP, $9.99
NGE: Angelic Days Manga Vol. 1 TP, $9.99
Orphen Manga Vol. 5 TP, $9.99

Aardvark-Vanaheim/Win-Mill Pro
Following Cerebus #8, $3.95

Abrams
Mom's Cancer HC, $12.95

Abstract Studios
Strangers In Paradise #82, $2.95

AC Comics
Best of the West #56, $6.95
Femforce: The Closer You Get, The Better We Look TP, $22.95
Golden Age Greats: Fine Art Sp, $24.95
Men of Mystery #58, $6.95

AK Entertainment Inc
Aya #1, $2.95
Jalila #1, $2.95
Rakan #1, $2.95
Zein #1, $2.95

Archie

To pay his library fine, Jughead is forced to get a job in ***Jughead & His Friends Digest* #11.**

May 3
Archie & Friends #100, $2.25
Archie Digest #225, $2.49
Sonic X #8, $2.25

May 10
Betty & Veronica Double Digest #142, $3.69
Veronica #170, $2.25

May 17
Betty & Veronica Spectacular #74, $2.25
Jughead #173, $2.25
Sonic The Hedgehog #162, $2.25
Tales From Riverdale Digest #11, $2.49

May 24
Archie #566, $2.25
Archie Double Digest #170, $3.69

May 31
Betty #156, $2.25
***Jughead and His Friends Digest* #11, $2.49**
Pals 'N' Gals Double Digest #103, $3.69
Sonic X #9, $2.25

Alias
10th Muse Vol. 2 #14, $3.50
Armorquest: Genesis Vol. 1 TP, $3.50
Blackbeard Legacy #1, $3.50
Chrono Mechanics: Precious Metal Coll. - Gold #3, $3.50
Free Comic Book Digest Vol. 2 May 2006, $0.25
Guardian Heroes One-Shot, $3.50
Hyper-Actives #4, $3.50
Judo Girl Vol. 2 #2, $3.50
Legend of Isis #13, $3.50
Orion The Hunter #3, $3.50

Americanime Productions
Bushido #1, $3.50
Katharsis #2, $3.50

Antarctic Press
Alice In Wonderland #4, $3.50
Gold Digger Heroes #75, (two covers $2.99)
Gold Digger Vol. 8 Pkt Manga TP, $12.95
Gold Digger: Swimsuit Special 2006, $4.50
Gold Digger: Throne of Shadows #1, $2.99
History of Web Comics SC, $14.95
Ninja High School #139, $2.99
Twilight X: War #6, $3.50

Arcana Studio
Ezra: Evoked Emotions #1, $3.95
Koni Waves #2, $3.00

Arsenic Lullaby Publishing
1,000 Deaths of Baron Von Donut #3, $2.99

Aspen
Shrugged #0, $2.50
Soulfire #8, $2.99

Atlantis Studios
Tinn Man #1, $2.95

Avatar
Alan Moore's Hypothetical Lizard #4, (two covers $3.50, spec. ed. $3.99)
Joe Lansdale's The Drive-In Vol. 2 #1, (two covers $3.50)
Lady Death Annual #1, (six covers $4.99, spec. ed. $9.99, leather cover $24.99)
Medieval Lady Death: War of the Winds #3, (two covers $3.99, spec. ed. $9.99)
Rich Johnston's Holed Up #3, (two covers $3.50)
Wolfskin #2, (four covers $3.99)
Yuggoth Creatures #3, (two covers $3.99, spec. ed. $5.99)

Bandai Entertainment Inc
Cowboy Bebop Film Manga Vol. 1 GN, $9.99
Tomb Raider Vol. 1 TP, $9.99

Bang! Entertainment
Blue Grind One-Shot, $4.95

Barbour Publishing Inc
Serenity Vol. 2: Stepping Out TP, $7.97

DARK HORSE COMICS

Dark Horse concludes its *What's Michael?* collections with ***Vol. 11: Planet of the Cats,*** scheduled to ship May 10.

May 3
Archenemies #2, $2.99
B.P.R.D.: The Universal Machine #2, $2.99
Eden: Vol. 3 It's An Endless World TP, $12.95
Trigun Maximum Vol. 9 TP, $9.95

May 10
Blade of the Immortal #113, $2.99
Scary Book Vol. 2: Insects TP, $13.95
Star Wars: Honor and Duty TP, $12.95
***What's Michael? Vol. 11: Planet of the Cats TP*, $9.95**

May 17
Aeon Flux TP, $12.95
Conan #28, $2.99
Star Wars: Legacy #0, $0.25
Star Wars: Rebellion My Brother, My Enemy #2, $2.99

May 24
Conan: Book of Thoth #3, $4.99
Concrete Vol. 5: Think Like A Mountain TP, $12.95
Dreadful Ed HC, $12.95
Ju-On Vol. 2 TP, $9.95
Nexus Archives Vol. 3 HC, $49.95

May 31
Apocalypse Nerd #3, $2.99
Criminal Macabre: Feat of Clay, $2.99
Star Wars: Knights of the Old Republic #5, $2.99

Basement Comics / Amryl Entert
Cavewoman: Reloaded #3, $3.95
Teenage Murder Bait One-Shot, $2.95

Black Cat
Dragonslippers GN, $15.00

Blurred Books
Blurred Vision Vol. 1 GN, $14.95

Bongo
Futurama Comics #25, $2.99
Simpsons Comics #118, $2.99
Simpsons Vol. 5: Big, Bouncy Book of Bart Simpson TP, $13.95

Boom! Studios
Hero Squared Ongoing #2, $3.99
Stardust Kid #4, $3.50
Tag #1, $3.99
War of the Worlds Second Wave #3, $2.99
X Isle #1, $2.99

Boychild/Russell-Cotes Museum
Japanese Drawing Room GN, $9.99

Broadsword Comics
Tarot: Witch of the Black Rose #38, $2.95 (spec. ed. $19.99)

Broccoli International USA Inc
Galaxy Angel Party Vol. 3 GN, $9.99

Buenaventura Press
Yeast Hoist 12 GN, $5.95

Carnal Comics
Demi Adventure Special #1, $5.95

Century Comics
First Kingdom Vol. 3 TP, $19.95
Singapore's Greatest Comics, $19.95

Checker Book Publishing Group
Alex Raymond's Flash Gordon Vol. 5 HC, $19.95
Milton Caniff's Steve Canyon 1951 TP, $17.95

Claypool
Elvira #157, $2.50
Soulsearchers #78, $2.50

Dabel Brothers Productions
Marshal #2, $2.95
Monte Cook's Ptolus #1, $2.95
Orson Scott Card's Wyrms #1, $2.95 (spec. ed. $5.95)
Raymond E. Feist's Magician: Apprentice #2, $2.95 (spec. ed. $5.95)
Red Prophet: Tales of Alvin Maker #3, $2.95 (spec. ed. $5.95)
XIII Vol. 1 TP, $14.95

Dargaud
Revenge of Count Skarbek Vol. 2: Heart of Bronze GN, $19.99

Del Rey
Basilisk Vol. 1 GN, $13.95
ES Vol. 1 GN, $10.95
Gacha Gacha Vol. 4 GN, $10.95
Negima Vol. 10 GN, $10.95
School Rumble Vol. 2 GN, $10.95
Tezuka's Buddha Vol. 1 TP, $14.95
XXXholic Vol. 7 GN, $10.95

Devil's Due Publishing
Dragonlance Chronicles Vol. 1: Dragons of Autumn Twilight TP, $17.95
Elsinore #6, $3.25
Forgotten Realms Dark Elf Sojourn #2, $4.95 (spec. ed. $8.95)
G.I. Joe Vs Transformers: Vol. 3 Art of War #3, (two covers $2.95)
G.I. Joe: America's Elite #11, $2.95
G.I. Joe: America's Elite: The Hunt For Cobra Commander, $0.25
G.I. Joe: Sigma 6 #6, $2.95
How To Self-Publish Comics #4, $4.95

DC

DC fills in the "One Year Later" gaps with 52, a weekly series beginning May 10.

May 3
Aquaman: Sword of Atlantis #42, $2.99
Authority: Magnificent Kevin TP, $14.99
Blood of the Demon #15, $2.99
Crisis On Multiple Earths Vol. 4 TP, $14.99
Detective Comics #819, $2.99
Exterminators #5, $2.99
Hard Time: Season Two #6, $2.99
Jonah Hex #7, $2.99
JSA #85, $2.99
Justice League Unlimited #21, $2.25
Looney Tunes #138, $2.25
Mad Magazine #466, $3.99
Outsiders #36, $2.99
Sandman Mystery Theatre Vol. 4: The Scorpion TP, $12.99
Superman: For Tomorrow Vol. 1 TP, $14.99
Swamp Thing #27, $2.99
Team Zero #6, $2.99
Testarotho Vol. 4, $9.99
Thunderbolt Jaxon #4, $2.99
Tower of the Future Vol. 3, $9.99
Y: The Last Man #45, $2.99

May 10
Can't Get No SC, $19.99
***52: Week* #1, $2.50**
Albion #5, $2.99
American Virgin #3, $2.99
Batman Strikes! #21, $2.25
Batman: Secrets #3, $2.99
Captain Atom: Armageddon #8, $2.99
Cartoon Network Action Pack #1, $2.25
Checkmate #2, $2.99
Crisis Aftermath: The Battle For Bludhaven #3, $2.99
Elfquest: The Discovery #3, $3.99
Ex Machina #20, $2.99
Fables #49, $2.99
Firestorm: The Nuclear Man #25, $2.99
Flash Archives Vol. 4 HC, $49.99
Hawkman: Vol. 4 Golden Eagle TP, $17.99
JLA Classified #22, $2.99
Mad Classics #7, $4.99
Mushashi #9 Vol. 7, $9.99
Nightwing #120, $2.99
Supergirl #7, $2.99
Supergirl #8, $2.99
Superman #652, $2.99
Superman/Shazam: First Thunder TP, $12.99
Wildcats: Nemesis #9, $2.99

May 17
100 Bullets #72, $2.99
***52: Week* #2, $2.50**
All Star Superman #4, $2.99
Batman: Legends of the Dark Knight #205, $2.99
Batman: Year One Hundred #4, $5.99
Birds of Prey #94, $2.99
Bite Club: Vampire Crime Unit #2, $2.99
Devil Does Exist Vol. 6, $9.99
Dmz #7, $2.99
Ex Machina Special #2, $2.99
Gals! Vol. 6, $9.99
Green Arrow #62, $2.99
Majestic #17, $2.99
Man-Bat #2, $2.99
Manhunter #22, $2.99
Red Sonja/Claw Devil's Hands #3, $2.99
Robin #150, $2.99
Scooby-Doo #108, $2.25
Sgt. Rock: The Prophecy #5, $2.99
Shadowpact #1, $2.99
Showcase Presents Haunted Tank Vol. 1 TP, $16.99
Superman: Strange Attractors TP, $12.99
Y: The Last Man Vol. 7 Paper Dolls TP, $14.99

May 24
***52: Week* #3, $2.50**
American Way #4, $2.99
Batman #653, $2.99
Blue Beetle #3, $2.99
Cartoon Network Block Party #21, $2.25
Cartoon Network Block Party Vol. 3: Can You Dig It?, $6.99
Cartoon Network Block Party Vol. 4: Blast Off!, $6.99
Catwoman #55, $2.99
Crisis Aftermath: The Battle For Bludhaven #4, $2.99
Hawkgirl #52, $2.99
Hellblazer #220, $2.99
JSA Classified #12, $2.99
Legion of Super-Heroes Vol. 2: Death of A Dream TP, $14.99
Loveless #7, $2.99
Loveless Vol. 1: A Kin of Homecoming TP, $9.99
Neil Gaiman's Neverwhere #8, $2.99
Secret Six #1, $2.99
Skye Runner #2, $2.99
Supergirl and the Legion of Super-Heroes #18, $2.99
Superman/Batman #25, $2.99
Superman/Batman #27, $2.99
Teen Titans #36, $2.99
Testament #6, $2.99
Young Magician Vol. 4, $9.99

May 31
***52: Week* #4, $2.50**
ABC A-Z: Smax and First American, $3.99
Action Comics #839, $2.99
Batman: Journey Into Knight #10, $2.99
Batman: Legends of the Dark Knight #206, $2.99
Crisis Aftermath: The Spectre #1, $2.99
Green Lantern #12, $2.99
Ion #2, $2.99
JLA Classified #23, $2.99
JLA: Vol. 19 World Without A Justice League TP, $12.99
Lucifer #74, $2.99
Matador #6, $2.99
Seven Soldiers of Victory Vol. 3 TP, $14.99
Superman Versus Lex Luthor TP, $19.99
Teen Titans Go #31, $2.25
Warlord #4, $2.99

Digital Manga Distribution
Antique Bakery Vol. 4 GN, $12.95
Cafe Kichijouji De Vol. 3 GN, $12.95
Edu Manga Ann Frank GN, $9.95
Little Butterfly GN, $12.95
Yellow Vol. 4 GN, $12.95
Yoshitoshi Abe's Lain GN, $24.95 (spec. ed. $39.95)
You & Harujon GN, $12.95

Digital Webbing
Bloodrayne: Twin Blades, $3.99
Digital Webbing Presents #29, $3.99

Disney Press
Gorilla Gorilla Vol. 1 GN, $4.99
Lilo & Stitch Vol. 1 GN, $4.99

Dork Storm Press
Dork Tower #34, $3.49
Dr. Blink, Superhero Shrink #3, $3.49
Ps238 #16, $2.99

Dr Masters Publications Inc
Journal of Vampire Hunter Book 1: Claws of Darkness #5, $9.95
Snk Vs Capcom Vol. 4, $9.95
Stray Little Devil Vol. 1 GN, $9.95

Drawn & Quarterly
Ed, The Happy Clown #7, $2.95
Fallen Angel GN, $9.95
Walt & Skeezix Vol. 2 HC, $29.95
We Are On Our Own HC, $19.95

Dynamite Entertainment
Army of Darkness #9, $2.99
Battlestar Galactica #0, $0.25
Red Sonja #11, $2.99
Red Sonja Vol. 1 TP, $19.95

COMICS IN YOUR FUTURE

EDICIONES 11:11
Juan Gimenez Sketchbook Vol. 1 Sc, $22.00

EXHIBIT A PRESS
Supernatural Law: #1 At The Box Office, $3.50

FANTAGRAPHICS BOOKS
But I Like It HC, $24.95
Castle Waiting HC, $29.95
Comics Journal #276, $9.95
Grenuord #3, $4.95
Hate Annual #6, $4.95
Krazy & Ignatz 1937-1938: Shifting Sands Dusts Cheek Powdered, $19.95
My Sister, My Double: Searching Betty GN, $12.95
Palestine TP, $24.95
Pink Sniper GN, $18.95
Rear Entry #12, $3.95
Safe Area Gorazde Sc, $19.95
Super Taboo XXX #3, $3.95
They Found Car, $7.95
Tijuana Bibles Vol. 7 TP, $14.95
You Call This Art GN, $24.95

FENICKX PRODUCTIONS LLC
Archaic #3, $2.99

GEMSTONE
Carl Barks' Greatest Ducktales Stories Vol. 1 TP, $10.95
Donald Duck Adventures Vol. 18 TP, $7.95
Donald Duck and Friends #340, $2.95
Mickey Mouse and Friends #289, $2.95
Uncle Scrooge #354, $6.95
Walt Disney's Comics and Stories #669, $6.95
Walt Disney's Vacation Parade #3, $8.95

GOAT HEAD PUBLICATIONS
Living With Zombies #7, $2.95

HEAVY METAL MAGAZINE
Hard Story HC, $12.95
Heavy Metal Summer 2006, $6.95

HEROIC PUBLISHING INC
Roy Thomas' Anthem #3, $3.25
Witchgirls Inc. #4, $3.25

HOUGHTON MIFFLIN COMPANY
Fun Home GN, $19.95

HYPERION BOOKS
Abadazad Book 1: The Road To Inconceiable, $9.99
Abadazad Book 2: The Dream Thief, $9.99

ICARUS PUBLISHING
A-G Super Erotic Anthology #35, $4.99
A-G Super Erotic Anthology #36, $4.99
A-G Super Erotic Anthology Mega, $18.00
Miku's Sexual Orgy Diary TP, $19.95

ICE KUNION
Antique Gift Shop Vol. 3 GN, $10.95
Goong Vol. 1 GN, $10.95
Heavenly Executioner Chiwoo Vol. 3 GN, $10.95

IDW
Angel Scriptbook #3, $3.99
Angel Spotlight: Gunn One Shot, $3.99
Chicanos #7, $3.99
Clive Barker's The Great and Secret Show #3, $3.99
Cobb: Off The Leash #1, $3.99
Grande Finale SC, $50.00
Metal Gear Solid: Sons of Liberty #6, $3.99
Spike Vs. Dracula #4, $3.99
Spike: Old Wounds One Shot, $7.49
Supermarket #3, $3.99
Transformers: Beast Wars #4, $2.99
Transformers: Generations #3, $2.49
Transformers: Infiltration #5, $2.99
Will Eisner's John Law: Angels and Ashes, Devils Dust #2, $3.99
Zombies! #1, $3.99

IMPERIUM COMICS
Trailer Park Terror Color Special #4, $3.99

INFINITY STUDIOS
Ninin Ga Shinobuden Vol. 1 GN, $9.95

KENZER & COMPANY
Knights of the Dinner Table #115, $4.99

LOBRAU PRODUCTIONS INC
Toupydoops #2, $3.50

MAM TOR PUBLISHING
Event Horizon Vol. 3 TP, $19.95

MARKOSIA
Brothers: The Fall of Lucifer #3, $3.50
Lexian Chronicles: Full Circle #8, $3.50
Midnight Kiss #5, $3.50
Mutation Vol. 1 TP, $14.99
Of Bitter Souls Vol. 1 TP, $18.99
Scatterbrain #3, $3.50
Shadowmancer #8, $3.50
Starship Troopers #3, $3.50

MIRAGE STUDIOS
Tales of Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles #23, $3.25

MOONSTONE
Lai Wan #1, $2.95
Phantom #11, $3.50

MR COMICS
Revolution On The Planet of the Apes #5, $3.98

NARWAIN PUBLISHING
Albert #2, $2.99
Bluff #2, $3.49
Jenna Meets 100 Girls #1, $3.49
Miserere #1, $3.49
Threshold #1, $3.99

NBM
Cryptozoo Crew Vol. 2 TP, $12.95
Lucifer's Garden of Verses Vol. 3: The Student SC, $8.95
Minerva Vol. 2, $9.95
Sizzle #30, $5.95
Treasury of Victorian Murder Vol. 8: Madeleine Smith HC, $15.95

NEKO PRESS
Kickass Girl: Skeletons In The Closet TP, $12.99

NETCOMICS
Hotel California GN, $14.99
Land of Silver Rain Vol. 2 GN, $9.99
Madtown Hospital Vol. 2 GN, $9.99
Pine Kiss Vol. 2 GN, $9.99

NEW ENGLAND COMICS
Tick: Days of Drama #6, $3.95

NEW RELIABLE PRESS
True Loves Vol. 1 GN, $12.99

ONI PRESS
Borrowed Time #1, $6.95
Local #6, $2.99
Love As A Foreign Language Omnibus Vol. 1 TP, $11.95
My Inner Bimbo #2, $2.99
Queen & Country #30, $2.99
Queen & Country: Declassified Vol. 2 HC, $20.00
Queen & Country: Declassified Vol. 3 HC, $20.00

PUFFIN GRAPHICS
20,000 Leagues Under The Sea Puffin GN, $10.99

PURE IMAGINATION PUBLISHING
Alex Toth: Edge of Genius Vol. 1 TP, $25.00

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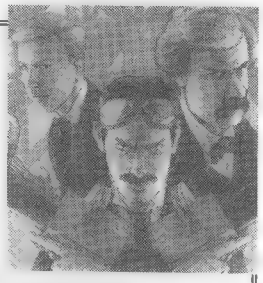
image

Gilded age notables, including Nikola Tesla, Mark Twain, and Thomas Edison work to end war forever in ***Five Fists of Science,*** scheduled to ship May 17.



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MAY 3

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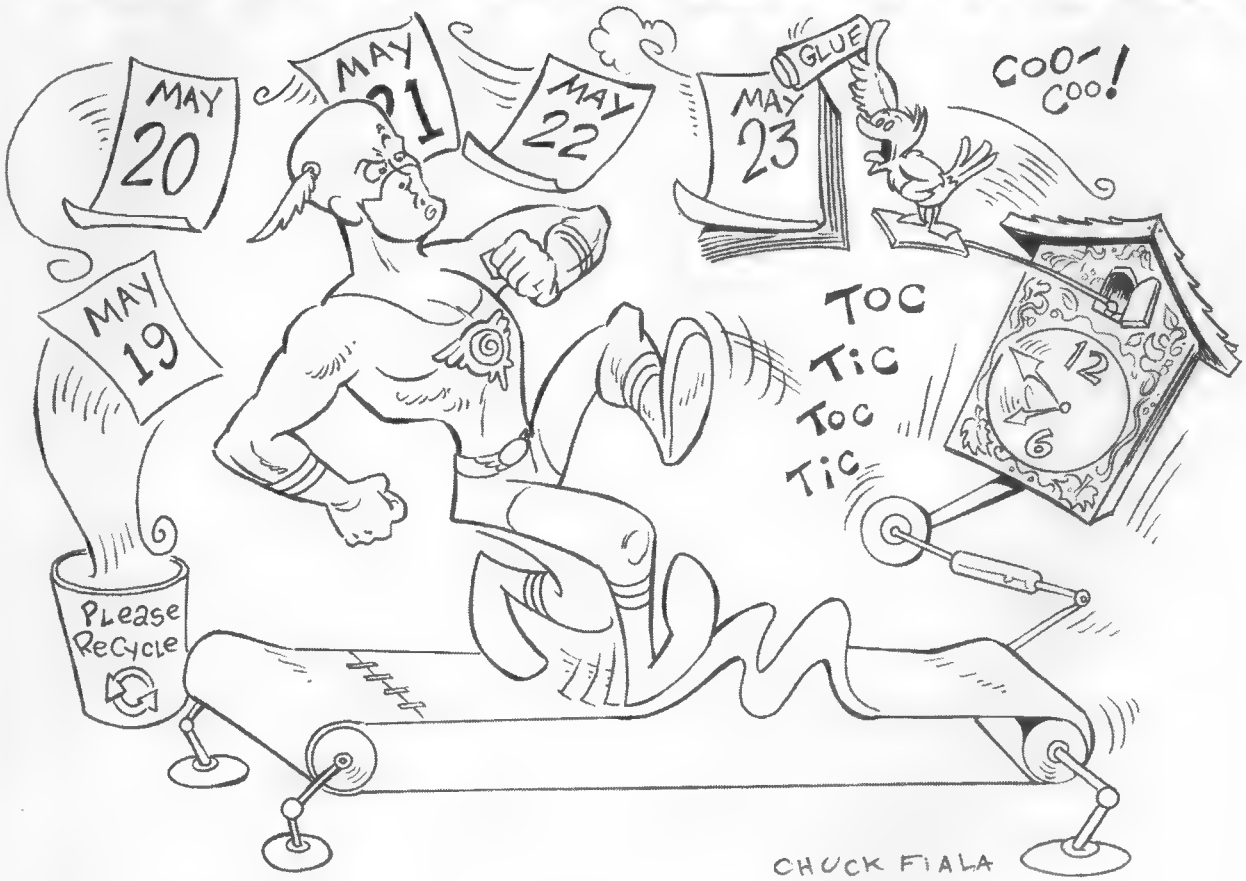
THE UNDOING



Rewinding history has become a way of life for publishers, comics creators, and fans themselves

by **JOHN JACKSON MILLER**

They could hear my scream all the way on the other side of the lake. Michigan, that is.

The brand new computer had seen fit to take the comics script of a couple of weeks' work — and replace everything in the file with caret (^) characters. The backup, too. No restorative technique could save it. I was left with a 128,000-caret pile of nothing.

And so it came to pass that, after the paramedics pried me out of the fetal positon — and following a momentary pause to sell my Apple stock — I began work on the kind of second draft all writers hate: the second first draft. All the past work had been undone.

This is a fate you wouldn't wish on anyone in their work, I thought.

Then I thought again: Fans wish it all the time!

There are countless stories that readers, editors, later writers — the *same* writers! — would happily reach through the mists of time to undo, if they could. My little story was harmless enough, but there are definitely some that have driven people to stick pins into voodoo-doll-sized hard drives. Or wish for the Winds of Watoomb to waft back through the windows of whatever year and blow the only typewritten manuscript out into the street. Or worse.

Those wishes being impossible, we wish for the next best thing. We wish for another creator to come along to void the previous work, retroactively filling that file full of carets, as it were. We're a nice bunch like that.

Aren't you glad you don't have fans at your day job? You'd never get that spreadsheet over to the boss...

Comics creators: Buying or renting?

So you move into a new house.

You like the house. You moved here, after all. But there's still some things you want to do with it.

That spot in back would be a nice place for a gazebo. That shrubbery over there really needs to be trimmed back so you can spy on the neighbors. That wallpaper in the kitchen has to go, of course. And if you take out that one wall, you've got a great place to display your collection of Huckleberry Hound Pez dispensers. The opportunities are endless.

But then, you remember: You're renting.

OK, then maybe you *don't* want to put a lot of time and money into landscaping when you're just going to have to leave eventually. And the landlord may not be too happy with you ripping out walls or tearing down the wallpaper his sainted mother picked out. It's your rent, but it's their house.

In a publishing world where 90% of the comics sold belong to one corporate entity or another, creative teams are very much in the role of renters. Some tenants get the run of the place. Most, though, need to leave things pretty much as they found them — or, if they make changes, the landlord's got to be fully on board.

In this analogy, you'd figure fans would very much be in the role of house guests. Now, you rarely expect guests to care whether the host owns the place or is just renting; they just want to enjoy a good party. So, as long as the Old Frothingslosh and the Cheetos Brand cheese-flavored snacks keep flowing, they're happy. Right?

Not quite. Comics is not that kind of party, and comics fans aren't like other guests. Because they've been coming to parties in these rentals for years, they have definite opinions about the wallpaper and the hedges and that wall over there. They've got a lot of time and experience invested here themselves, and they don't want to see the owner *or* the renter mess the place up!

So, every time a renter moves out — or a comics creator leaves an ongoing title — the same questions are asked. What should go back the way it was? The fans ask it. The publisher asks it. The new tenant asks it.

Depending on the answers, the undoing is soon to follow...

Hit Ctrl-Z to undo

We're all familiar with undoings in fiction. Sherlock Holmes died but got better. The Cunninghams never had their eldest son, which must have come as a surprise to him and them both. An entire season of *Dallas* was wiped out when Bobby Ewing appeared alive in the shower. (Actually, one speculates that, if his corpse had been discovered in the shower, it would have been equally shocking — if ultimately understandable. He hadn't bathed in a year, after all!)

It's happened enough in comics that some years back we coined our own term: "retroactive continuity" or "retcon." Most longtime readers of this magazine know that term well but may not be aware of how many distinctions and gradations fans have added to it.

Retconning by adding a character or event to the past without changing it is generally seen as less problematic. An example would be Archie Goodwin's insertion of Tyler Lucian, "the coward of the Battle of Yavin," into the events of *Star Wars* in #29 of the Marvel title. His existence did nothing to change our understanding of the previously shown events but, rather, elaborated on what we saw.

Retconning by changing readers' understanding of past events tends to be more contentious. Tom DeFalco's revelation that Mary Jane had always known Spider-Man's identity — finally and neatly depicted in Gerry Conway's *Spider-Man: Parallel Lives* — is an example. Not all such retcons are controversial: I think everyone agrees Reed Richards' and Ben Grimm's participation in World War II has grown increasingly untenable. But some have been real dillies, if I can use that term in 2006. Let's not even talk about clones...

Tom DeFalco's revelation that Mary Jane had always known Spider-Man's identity — finally and neatly depicted in Gerry Conway's *Spider-Man: Parallel Lives* — is an example of retconning.

Even Mopee has a fan, or so they tell me.

Finally, retconning by completely eliminating an event or events is the equivalent of invasive surgery. ("But I *needed* that spleen!") Comics equivalents abound. But most other times, the stories of the past — the wallpaper and shrubs of our analogy — have an interested constituency. Even Mopee has a fan, or so they tell me.

The risks that creators run with longtime fans increase as you head across that spectrum, from minor details to major revisions — and it's the *readers*, not the creator, who'll decide how far a creator has gone.

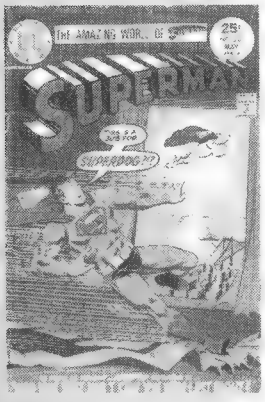
Think back to "Sins Past," the 2004 *Amazing Spider-Man* storyline which established that Gwen Stacy had played the marimba with gross old bumpy-headed Norman Osborn. On our retcon spectrum up there, it's somewhere in the middle: It was an event we did not see then (thankfully, for it would have made the Comics Code people ill) but one that could have happened, given a window of opportunity in the continuity. Many fans determined for themselves that it, instead, made a whole swath of past stories untenable — tantamount to undoing them completely. For those fans, J. Michael Straczynski could no more whip this new interpretation onto the character and make those old stories still work than if he had proposed that she was subbing for Batgirl while "away in London."

Do-it-yourself undoing

I'll cop to a Freudian slip: A paragraphs back, when I used the word "established" with regard to "Sins Past," I must confess I used the delete key. I originally wrote "postulated" rather than "established," inserting my personal acceptance of the story, or lack of same, into the question.

And, yes, for every fan, there's a different "personal continuity." I think it was Mark Evanier who wrote of "Krypto-revisionism," the selective way in which fans integrate or disregard changes in a story with their own, personal version of that universe. (That's the idea behind the name: You can enjoy your Superman with or without Krypto!)

I think it was Mark Evanier who wrote of "Krypto-revisionism," the selective way in which fans integrate or disregard changes in a story with their own, personal version of that universe.



We all have those in one way or another on a lot of things, not just comics. I've placed so mental asterisks I'm running out. The third and fourth *Batman* movies. The third and fourth *Aliens* movies. The third and fourth *Superman* movies. (Say, something of a pattern here...) Arthur C. Clarke's *2001, 2010,* and *3001* happened in my world, but not so much *2061. Purple Rain* happened, but *Grafitti Bridge* didn't — both as a movie and as an album! There are enough willful holes in my James Bond movie collection that the discs in the box sets keep falling over. McDonald's never offered the McRib sandwich. And so on...

The problem with living in your own little world, though, is that no one else does — and it can be difficult to keep up the front in the face of continued opposition. Let's go back to that party. You don't like the furniture the new tenant has added but, even pretending that it's not there, you're still bound to trip over it.

The option then is pretty simple: Learn to live with it, or party somewhere else. George Lucas says Greedo shot first, and, if anyone's qualified to make that decision, he's the guy. It may not be how I saw it (literally, in the theater!), but I accept that, should I ever be tapped for involvement with *Star Wars: The Last Moments of Greedo,* that's the way it is.

Undo influence

In a fictional world in which anything "established" can be undone, "postulated" is pretty much the proper term at all times, anyway. So, given that, perhaps we should think about these things in a different way. The proper way to judge an undoing is by what it *does*, not what it undoes. Simply put, ***the undoing must serve a greater purpose.*** That could mean an even better story, a timeline fix (as in the aforementioned Word War II case), or something more.

"Greater" is the key word. Consider two of the big undoings by a master undo-er, John Byrne. As the story goes, Byrne preferred the original X-Men and didn't care for how Jean Grey's character had been transformed — and in the lead-up to the launch of *X-Factor* for those original X-Men, established that Jean was alive and had never been Phoenix, and that the Phoenix we saw die in *X-Men* #137 was a clone. That, most think, failed the "greater" test, as what was done in *X-Factor* paled next to the importance of the earlier stories.

Contrast that with the reboot of the Superman universe slightly later. Some may contest this, but I think that change *did* serve the original purpose of snagging a new generation of readers — mine — stymied by a previous mountain of continuity that included Pat Boone and such a laundry list of powers no video game could provide buttons for them all. The sales figures certainly show it.

Stories will keep changing as long as there are publishers with titles to staff. Since there's no guarantee anything a creator does won't be undone later, pretty much the only thing a writer can do is try to leave the series better than he found it. Do that well, and the stories may stand up as canon a little longer than most and as "personal canon" with more fans.

Now, if you'll excuse me, I have a second — *cough!* — first draft to finish...

JOHN JACKSON MILLER is a writer of comics including *Star Wars: Knights of the Old Republic*. Check out his redesigned website and blog at *www.farawaypress.com*, visit him at *www.cbgxtra.com*, and drop him a line at *ohso@krause.com*!

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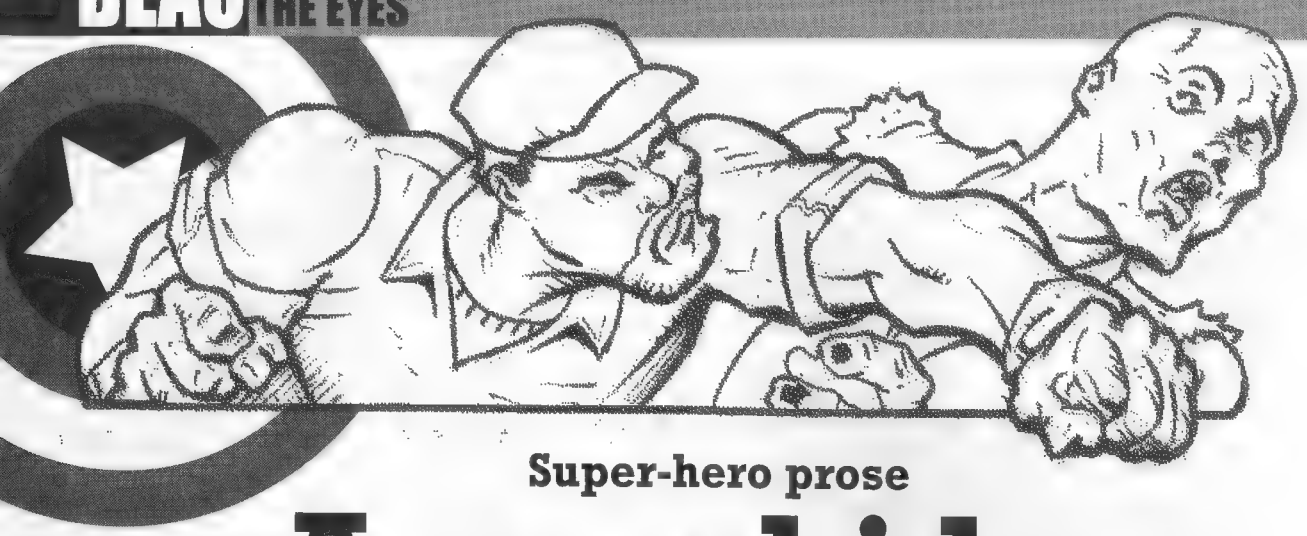


Super-hero prose

A novel idea

by **BEAU SMITH**

I was in junior high school when these came out and can remember reading them over and over, soaking up every word and scene.

The tall figure of Captain America moved purposefully to the fallen thug. The man was unshaven, and his eyes, when he eventually opened them, were weak and shifty. He sat against the wall, his legs straight in front of him. Rogers leaned over him.

"Okay, fella. It's time for some talking."

"I don't know nuthin'," The man grunted sullenly.

Rogers bent and fixed his gauntleted fist in the man's shirt. He rose smoothly to full height, pulling the heavier man with him. He shook the man twice, jerking his head back and forth.

"Let's not be stubborn."

"I-I ..." The man's eyes had glazed, and his mouth hung slackly. He was slumped, limp, in Rogers grasp. But he had stolen a covert glimpse at the crude desk on the side of the room.

Rogers let the man fall, sprawling to the dirt floor. With two quick strides he was at the desk.

Of course that guy *"Rogers"* was none other than Captain America. That little bit of text was from the 1968 paperback *The Great Gold Steal* written by Ted White. It was published by Bantam Books. It starred Marvel Comics' Captain America with a dazzling, moody painted cover of Cap standing with his shield in one hand and a cool-looking machine pistol in the other.

The year before that, Bantam Books had published *The Avengers Battle The Earth-Wrecker* by Otto Binder. Another fun paperback with a fantastic painted cover. I was in junior high school when these came out and can remember reading them over and over, soaking up every word and scene. Other than the covers, there were no other illustrations. Your mind took you on this trip and it was quite a ride.

Unlike today, there weren't a lot of outlets for comic-book readers. No videogames, no Internet, no comics shops, and no news sites devoted to just comic-book news. It was truly the time of being a hunter-gatherer. Being in the right place at the right time had a lot to do with it.

I can still remember the thrill of stumbling over these books when I was at the corner drugstore. I had to look twice to make sure that I was really seeing these. They were 50¢ each, the price of two comic book annuals of that time. I thought that was a great deal. After all, these books would last a lot longer than the 10 or 15 minutes it took to read a comic book, and I was bound to get more insight on the characters, since it was prose and longer than 22 pages.

The tragic part of this find was that, as a kid, I thought there would be more. As with comic books, I thought that Bantam Books would be doing more of these using different Marvel super-heroes. I was wrong. I searched the newsstands and bookstores for years after that, always looking for Daredevil, Iron Man, or maybe even Sgt. Fury. It never happened.

Granted, there were others in the form of The Phantom by Lee Falk that Avon Books published. They also had wonderful painted covers and were even a little more violent than the comic-strip and comic-book versions of The Phantom. That was great news for me. I had grown tired of the "goodie-two shoes" writing of the strips and the comics. I think I read somewhere that these Phantom novels were ghost-

written. I think that's why they were better.

Recently, I got these books out of my collection and re-read them. I was surprised how well they stood up to the test of time and my manly sophistication. I was really impressed with The Phantom paperback *Killer's Town*. It was written in 1973 and had a good hard edge to it for The Phantom.

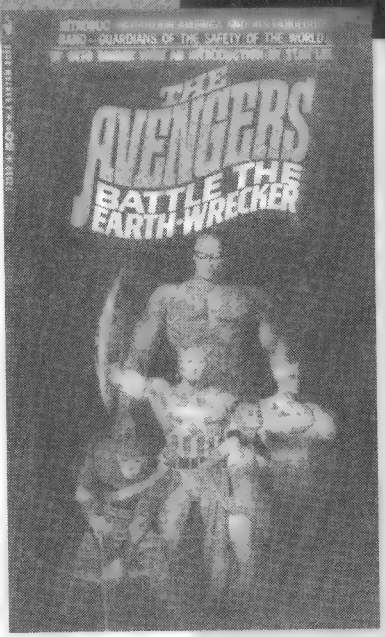
In the past decade, Marvel, DC, IDW, Moonstone, and a few others have done more prose books. The format has been all over the place: some in hardcover, some in trade-paperback form, and in various sizes. If memory serves me right, I think Marvel and DC farmed their novels out through book distribution. I'm sure they were available for the direct market, as well.

From a publishing standpoint, prose books don't cost as much to print and put together as comics. Creative costs are lower, and, if the right format is chosen, they could cost even less to publish. It'd be nice to dress 'em up a little with chapter illustrations and such. There are an awful lot of writers out there in comic books that can do and are available for prose books right now. It would also be interesting and entertaining to read super-hero prose books by some of the current popular writers.

In a prose story there is so much more to each character that can be explored. There are so many more characters that could be spotlighted and showcased. I believe that the direct market is more than ready for inexpensive prose books, more so now than ever before. The key would be to keep the price low so that the books would be attractive and worth the risk for the reader to invest in. Later, these stories could be collected into a large hardcover or some sort of slipcase edition that is signed and numbered. The main goal would be to give the readers a place where they could get to know the characters even better: a stage for the writers to have a larger area to expand a story and really flesh out and evolve characters.

Ten years ago this wouldn't have worked. It was the time of heavy speculation and supposedly art-driven comics. Right now, comics are back to being what they should be: story-driven with art that's equal to the task. It is no longer lopsided. It's a lot like it was in the late '60s and mid-'80s, when art and story walked hand in hand. That's why I think now is the time for prose books to flourish. I will say that I think Marvel and DC have more to gain from this now. After all, the direct market is super-hero driven. Yes, I think the indy market would prosper, as well, from doing this, but to really get a hook into readers I think the super-hero side of it is gonna have to be established to make the snowball bigger. It's also where the money is to be made on a bigger scale — as long as these prose stories are not overpriced.

I'm not sure who has the rights to the two Bantam Books with Captain America and The Avengers, but it would really be worth it for Marvel to check into to see about reprinting them in a new, inexpensive format to test the waters in the direct market. I'm sure there are lots of comic-book readers who would love to read these stories to see what they were all about. As far as I know, these have never been reprinted ever. If I'm wrong, I hope someone out there will let me know.



Marvel and DC want younger readers. We all do. We're all eager to have someone to pass the torch to. After rereading these two Bantam books, I'd say that they were geared to all ages. After all, I read 'em when I was young and now that I'm not so young. I got a lot of enjoyment out of them. A good writer can make anyone of any age enjoy a story. What Marvel and DC would have to do nowadays is ride herd on the writers not to be too adult. I know most of today's writers, and they would see this as a chance to throw in a lot of cussin' and sex. A good writer can write an entertaining story without leaning on shock as a crutch. A lazy writer — or one who just wants to satisfy his own interests — will take the easy way out. A good editor with the company's and reader's best interests in mind is needed, not people who want to read what only interests them. Comic-book editors and writers need to be a little more selfless.

I'd love to hear what your thoughts are on super-hero prose books. I'm sure everyone here at ***Comics Buyer's Guide*** would, also. I hope that some of you out there have read *The Great Gold Steal* or *The Avengers Battle The Earth-Wrecker*. I'd love for you to share your thoughts on them with the other readers of ***CBG***. Comics used to be a community that always shared. So let's share.

Remember, next time you're in a used book store or surfing eBay, look for these books — or throw money and bids on paperbacks featuring such characters as Doc Savage, The Phantom, The Shadow, The Avenger, and Tarzan. Then, write to Marvel and DC and let 'em know you wanna see prose with The Avengers, Captain America, Hawkman, Wildcat, Sub-Mariner, and B'wana Beast.

Tell 'em Beau sent ya.

I hope that some of you out there have read *The Great Gold Steal* or *The Avengers Battle The Earth-Wrecker*.

BEAU SMITH invites questions, answers, thoughts or wonderful items of worth to The Flying Fist Ranch, P.O. Box 706, Ceredo, WV 25507. E-mail Beau at ***beau@flyingfistranch.com*** or visit his website: ***www.flyingfistranch.com***
Column © 2006 Beau Smith

East Coast Black Age of Comics Convention

Questing for justice

by **TONY ISABELLA**

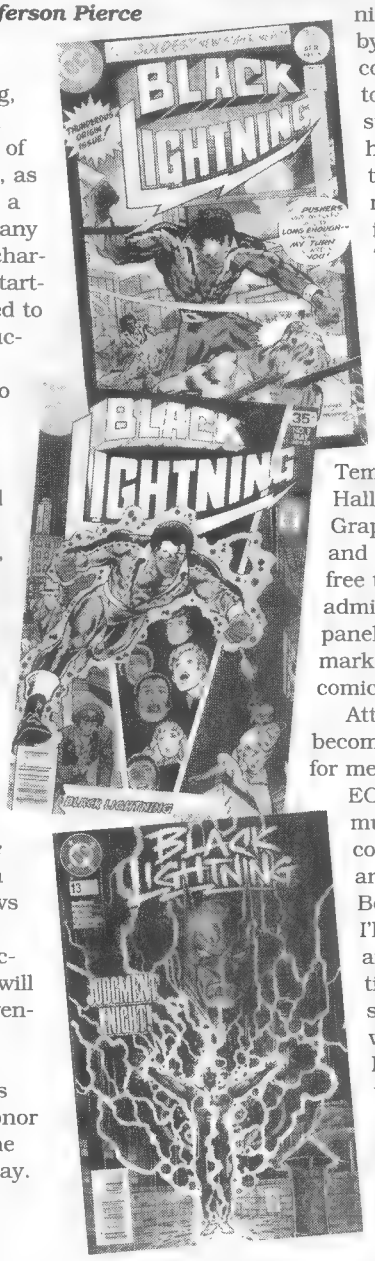
Attending conventions has become increasingly problematic for me in recent years, but the ECBAOCC, central as it is to so much of what I've tried to do in comics, is simply too important an event for me to miss.

Justice, like lightning, shall ever appear,
To some men hope, and, to other men fear.
*— **Jefferson Pierce***

The duality of justice was always central to Black Lightning, the character I created for DC in 1976. He was born as much out of my quest for fairness, for justice, as anything else. From my years as a comics fan, I knew there were many comics readers and few comics characters who were black. When I started working in the industry, I tried to address that imbalance. Did I succeed even a little? Did I screw things up? Is there more I can do to address the imbalance that still exists?

These are some of the questions I will likely ask or be asked at the Fifth Annual East Coast Black Age of Comics Convention, which will be held in Philadelphia on May 19 and 20. I'll be attending as a guest of the show and participating in a panel discussion with *Blackjack* writer Alex Simmons, cartoonist Tim Jackson, Bronze Age *Black Lightning* artist Trevor Von Eeden, and historian Professor William Foster, author of *Looking for a Face Like Mine* [Fine Tooth Press, $9.95], a collection of essays and interviews on African-American comics and creators, which, by the way, I recommend highly. The ECBAOCC will be one of only three comics conventions I'm attending this year.

There will be a reception on Friday, May 19, at Philadelphia's African American Museum to honor artists and writers who paved the way for the work being done today.



This is also the first year the Glyph Awards will be presented. The Glyph Awards recognize the best in comics made by, for, and about people of color. While it is not exclusive to black creators, it does strive to honor those who have made the greatest contributions to the comics medium in terms of both critical and commercial impact. The awards hope to encourage more diverse and high quality work across the board and inspire new creators to add their voices to the field.

The convention is on Saturday, May 20, at Temple University's Anderson Hall. Workshops in Drawing, Graphics/Technology, Writing, and the Business of Comics are free to attendees with the price of admission. There will also be two panel discussions and an all-day marketplace to buy and sell comics-related items.

Attending conventions has become increasingly problematic for me in recent years, but the ECBAOCC, central as it is to so much of what I've tried to do in comics, is simply too important an event for me to miss. Besides the panel discussion, I'll be signing as many books and answering as many questions as time and circumstance allow. I'm looking forward to meeting my ***CBG*** and Black Lightning readers there.

For more information, visit the ECBAOCC website at *www.ecbacc.com.*

Love and Capes #1
by Thom Zahler

Love and Capes #1 (Maerkle Press, $3.95) is the new comic book by my multi-talented pal Thom Zahler. It's the story of a couple and their relationship, a relationship complicated by the guy's being a super-hero. Zahler is the writer, artist, letterer, colorist, editor, and publisher of this 28-page, full-color comic book. If the printer had let him run the press, he probably would've done that, too.

Abby and Mark are a pretty cute couple. She owns a bookstore, and, when he's not The Crusader, he's an accountant. "I still have to pay my bills," he explains. "Wearing a cape doesn't generate a paycheck. I just do taxes at super-speed. Except depreciation tables. Man, are those things complicated!"

Love and Capes is a romantic comedy with occasional panels of super-folks in costume. It starts a short time before Mark shares his secret with Abby and continues through some of the pitfalls the relationship will bring, such as Mark's having dated the equivalent of Wonder Woman before he met Abby. And that "risking his life on a regular basis" thing. It's a very funny, very human comic book with a bright-and-bouncy art style that I love more with each and every page. My pal has done real good here.

Love and Capes #1 will be solicited in May's *Previews* for July release, but you can enjoy free samples and purchase an autographed copy of the issue by going to *www.loveandcapes.com*.

Love and Capes #1 gets the full five out of five Tonys. Leave a space for it on next year's awards ballots.

Marvel Romance
by various creators

There aren't any super-heroes in ***Marvel Romance*** ($19.95), but there are stories drawn by some of Marvel's all-time-best artists. Among those represented are Jack Kirby, John Buscema, Gene Colan, John Romita, Don Heck, Dick Giordano, and Jim Steranko. Several of the stories are written by Stan Lee.

Marvel was a prolific publisher of romance comics in the 1950s and early 1960s. Even such teen humor titles as *Patsy Walker* had much in common with traditional romance comics. From *Patsy Walker* #119 (Nov 64), "Patsy's Secret Boyfriend" by Lee and artist Sol Brodsky is a terrific blend of the genres.

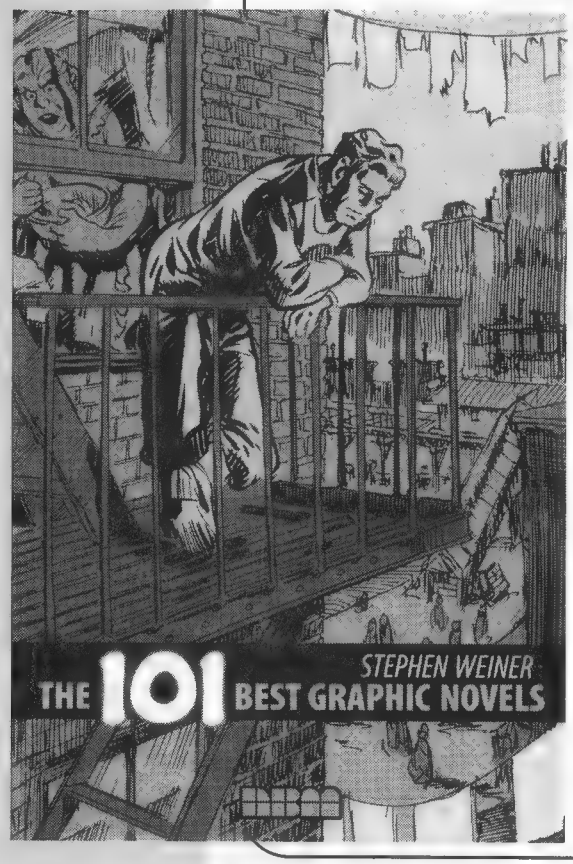
The tales reprinted here have the usual heartbreaks, crushes, and misunderstandings found in most romance comics, but the writing and art both have more snap to them. The dynamism found in Kirby's adventure comics is evident in his romance work, as well. Two stories inked by Al Hartley are especially good.

The Patsy Walker story divides the book between the stories of the 1960s and those of Marvel's short-lived return to the genre in the early 1970s. Though the later tales have more actresses, disco dancers, and waitresses than the earlier ones, they share the same mix of happy endings and tragic mistakes. Standing out among them are "My Heart Broke in Hollywood," with its Peter Max-inspired art by Steranko; "One Day a Week," a tale of truck-stop love drawn by Jim Starlin and Jack Abel; and "As Time Goes By," wherein a young woman's love for Humphrey Bogart movies jeopardizes her real-life romance. That last one was written by Gary Friedrich with art by Colan and Giordano.

Marvel is best and rightfully known for its super-hero comic books, but the company has published great material is many other genres, as well. I hope *Marvel Romance* is the first in a series of books showcasing that material. Putting my disembodied columnist heads where my keyboard is, I'm giving this spiffy collection four out of five Tonys.

www.marvel.com

The 101 Best Graphic Novels
by Stephen Weiner



Graphic novels and trade paperbacks are now as big a part of the comics industry as are the periodicals, so it's not surprising two "guides" to such books have been sent to me in recent months. Each has its pluses.

Stephen Weiner's ***The 101 Best Graphic Novels*** (NBM, $9.95) is the second, updated version of his "concise guide to the 101 best graphic novels currently available." Its 6x9-inch dimensions make it easy to read and handy to carry, but I found myself questioning many of his choices. Where were Howard Cruse's *Stuck Rubber Baby* or Joe Kubert's *Yossel*? How can the *T.H.U.N.D.E.R. Agents Archives*, charming 1960s super-hero/super-spy comics though they might have been, rate a spot on this list, when those graphic novels and *Locas: The Maggie and Hopey Stories* do not? I also find it suspect that NBM's own *Nancy Drew: The Demon of River Heights* made it on a list of the 101 *best* graphic novels. It's an entertaining book, a good book, but is it really *that* good?

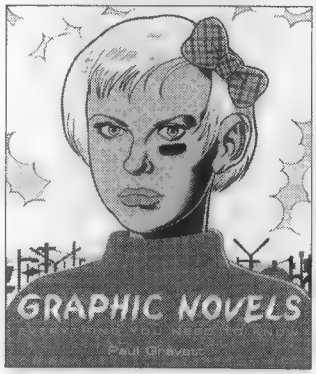
The 101 Best Graphic Novels is a catchy title. However, while the book could certainly be helpful to a graphic-novel novice, its contents don't measure up to that title. As a primer for libraries just starting to include graphic novels in their collections — the suggested reading levels for Weiner's choices are excellent — it's a useful if limited resource, but, again, it falls short of living up to the claim of its title. It gets three Tonys.

www.nbmpublishing.com

Graphic Novels: Everything You Need to Know
by Paul Gravett

Reading it requires serious commitment and a good, sturdy table. But it's worth the effort.

From HarperCollins, Paul Gravett's ***Graphic Novels: Everything You Need to Know*** ($24.95) is the superior guide. It's a handsome book offering more and larger examples of the GNs being recommended than the Weiner guide, with some of those examples being reproduced in color.



The book opens with a two-page Chester Brown strip on graphic novels. Originally published in *The New Yorker*, the strip informs the novice and amuses the more experienced graphic-novel reader.

Gravett concisely and wittily discusses the what of comic books and graphic novels, lists 18 "stories to change your life," and then expands on his list in chapters covering the remarkable variety of works available to GN readers.

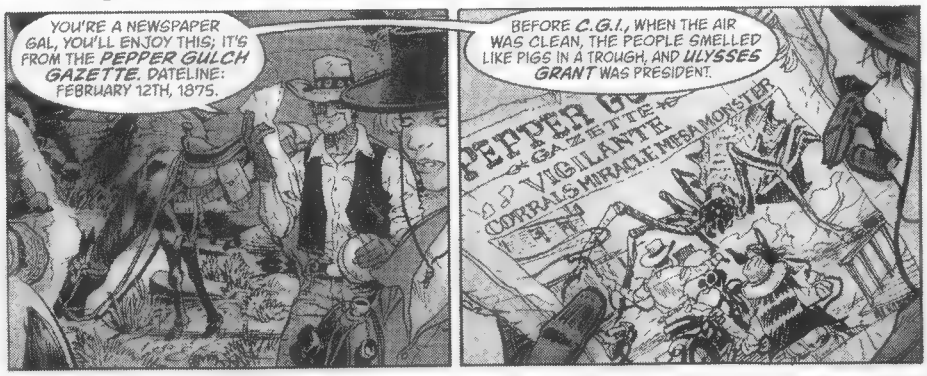
He covers fantasies and slice-of-life stories, super-hero and other adventurous tales, alternative works, historical books, European albums, manga, horror, science fiction, and mysteries. I'd be hard-pressed to name a genre or type of graphic novel he hasn't at least touched on in this guide. He focuses on his key choices, affording them several pages of discussion and examples each before following up with recommendations of other GNs of a similar nature.

You could make this book the cornerstone of a comprehensive course in comics and graphic novels.

If *Graphic Novels* has a drawback, it's that it's too handsome a book. Its 9.5x11-inch size and high-quality paper stock make it a little awkward to handle. Reading it requires serious commitment and a good, sturdy table. But it's worth the effort. It earns the full five Tonys.

www.harpercollins.com

Seven Soldiers of Victory Vol. 1
by Grant Morrison and various artists



You say you want a big honking superhero story that doesn't have the hundreds of characters to be found in *Infinite Crisis* or *Civil War*? Allow me to direct your attention to ***Seven Soldiers of Victory* Vol. 1** (DC, $14.99), the first of four books featuring writer Grant Morrison's decidedly different take on such stories.

This one starts off with *Seven Soldiers of Victory* #0, in which the *six* members of the reconstituted team fare poorly against the alien Sheeda. It's followed by seven issues of solo mini-series starring the members of the re-reconstituted team: heroes who must somehow save the Earth without ever meeting one another. The solo series are part of the larger whole, which concludes with a final bookend edition. That's 30 issues in all.

Right up front, I have no idea how any of this fits into the DC universe continuity. Morrison's *Shining Knight* doesn't seem to be the same guy who has run with The Justice League. He's much younger, and his passage to our time comes at the fall of Camelot — at the hands of the Sheeda — and via the alien Castle Revolving. His winged horse can talk. The Knight doesn't speak or understand modern English until the second of the two issues reprinted in this volume. He's depressed and oppressed by an alien-driven guilt monster but rediscovers his knightly purpose in his strange new world.

The Manhattan Guardian is the superheroic symbol of a tabloid newspaper of the same name. He's an ex-policeman who left the force after a shooting incident. He wears the costume of the Golden Age character created by Joe Simon and Jack Kirby but is otherwise unrelated to either the original Guardian or the clone introduced by Kirby in *Superman's Pal Jimmy Olsen*. His first assignment involves rival gangs of underground subway pirates vying for a secret treasure and runs the length of the two issues reprinted here. It is an adventure as wondrously wild as (albeit much grittier than) those Kirby was doing for DC in the early 1970s.

Zatanna is closest to her current DC universe incarnation. I confess my favorite Zatanna is the determined, perky, and wholesomely sexy magician who made her debut in a fondly remembered Hawkman story by Gardner Fox and Murphy Anderson. Despite that, I found Morrison's take on her — a troubled young woman whose confidence in her magic and herself is sorely tested — intriguing. Several other magically inclined DC universe characters appear in the two issues included in this volume, often to surprising effect.

The fourth "soldier" in this volume is Klarion the Witchboy, another Kirby creation. Morrison has re-imagined him as a curious, rebellious lad living in the limbo-city of Croatoan. His kind fled our world in centuries past, before the murderous attacks of the Sheeda. They're ruled by the Submissionaries, cruel men who are more concerned with maintaining their power than safeguarding their people. Klarion can be arrogant and obnoxious, but I'd take him over the Submissionaries any day.

Morrison's stories are drawn by J.H. Williams III, Ryan Sook, Simone Bianchi, Cameron Stewart. Frazèr Irving, and Mike Gray. All are fine artists who bring fresh looks to these stories of unusual heroes. With more than 200 pages of spiffy comics and special features, *Seven Soldiers of* Vol. 1 earns five Tonys. The second volume should be out by the time you read this review, with the remaining two following in May and July.

www.dccomics.com

Ultra Maniac Vol. 1 and Vol. 2
by Wataru Yoshizumi

Several months back (***CBG*** #1610), in reviewing the first issue of *Shojo Beat*, I made these less-than-flattering remarks about the bonus *Ultra Maniac* DVD and mini-comic that came with the magazine.

I wrote:

Neither did much for me. The series strikes me as a one-note wonder. A witch girl in training goes to a non-magical school. She is befriended by a popular-but-shy young lady and proceeds to use her unskilled magic to help her mortal friend. Whenever she uses her magic, things go wrong and hilarity tries-but-fails to reign. Besides the episode mentioned at the start of this review, the DVD also has some scenes from other episodes.

CBG contributor John Lustig, who does the English adaptation of the manga, sent me the first two *Ultra Maniac* volumes and asked me to give the series another chance. Since my reviews are hardly carved in stone — they used to be, but the cost of mailing them to ***CBG*** became prohibitive — I agreed.

It turns out *Ultra Maniac* is something of a slow starter.

It turns out *Ultra Maniac* is something of a slow starter. It gets a lot more interesting as it goes along and as creator Wataru Yoshizumi develops witch-girl Nina and her friend Ayu. The first book ends with an intriguing cliffhanger: Is Tetsushi, the boy Ayu likes, not really the nice guy he appears to be? The answer to the question makes Tetsushi a far more interesting character than the typical manga romantic interest.

The second volume further enlivens the ongoing story with the arrivals of Leo, Nina's otherworldly pet, and Yuta, a mischievous student from Nina's magical realm who is secretly in love with her.

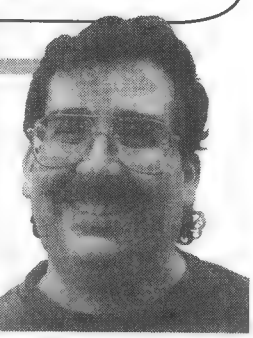
This leads to a further revelation: Ayu has a surprising rival for Tetsushi's affections.

Not even Lustig could get me to watch another episode of the *Ultra Maniac* anime — Nina is annoying when you hear her and see her bounce about — but I'm grateful for this second look at the manga.

***Ultra Maniac* Vol. 1** earns a respectable three out of five Tonys ...

... and **Vol. 2** gets four.

www.shojobeat.com



TONY ISABELLA, comics writer and author, has been appearing in *CBG* since #3 in 1971. Review items can be sent to P.O. Box 1502, Medina, OH 44258. Check out his website at **www.wfcomics.com/tony**, or e-mail him at **tony@wfcomics.com!**

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It could happen...

The enemies of your collectibles are always lurking: fire, hurricanes, floods, theft, tornadoes. Thousands of these treasures are lost to collectors each year. Every collector needs a "Comfort Zone" of protection. That's our job. Your homeowners insurance is rarely enough to cover your valuable collectibles. Count on CIA for wide-ranging, inexpensive coverage. Contact us today!

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*Thousands of fine people lost their lifetime hobbies in the 2004 hurricane season. Collectibles ranging from stamps and autographs of famous people, to wonderful model railroad layouts and glass figurines were sadly destroyed. Did insurance help many of these victims? In too many cases, the answer was, "**NO.**"*

I've been a collector all of my life—even before I became the owner of a firm that specializes in providing insurance for thousands of collectibles. I know what it's like to lose the treasures of a lifetime hobby. Here's a lesson I learned that I'd like to pass along to you: Homeowners insurance is rarely, if ever, adequate for collectibles. Take a minute now and call, write or e-mail us for brochures that can help your peace of mind.

Dan Walker

- **Sample collector rates:** $3,000 for $12, $10,000 for $40, $25,000 for $106, $50,000 for $216, $100,000 for $316, $200,000 for $476. Above $200,000, rate is $1.60 per $1,000.
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REVIEWS

***Sgt. Rock: The Prophecy* #1-2**
DC
$2.99@, color, 32 pgs.@, available now
Writer and artist: Joe Kubert
reviewed by **Michael Tierney** ★★★★

Since the beginning of comics history, war comics have been a staple of the industry. Throughout that time, the teaming of one creator and creation has stood above the others: Sgt. Rock by Joe Kubert.

"The Prophecy" is a six-issue miniseries that gives readers a family reunion, with Joe Kubert providing story and art, plus working on the coloring. As an added bonus, this first issue features a trio of Kubert covers, by Joe and his sons, Adam and Andy.

On a secret mission, Sgt. Rock and Easy Company have parachuted into a hotly contested No Man's Land between the German and Russian armies. Inside the chewed-up Lithuanian city of Latvia, they've been charged to pick up a mysterious "package" from partisans and deliver it to America. The partisans believe that this package might not only shorten the war, but win it.

Sgt. Rock explains why Easy Company was picked for this difficult job; " 'Cause we're good .. 'cause we can be *bad!*" This comic is bad — in a good way.

www.dccomics.com

Archie Pals 'n' Gals Double Digest #100

Archie

$3.55, color, 190 pgs., available now
Writers and artists: Various
reviewed by **Jack Abramowitz** ★★★

Archie has spectacularly blown a few opportunities for recent milestone issues, so you have to give the company credit when it does something noteworthy. This issue features the debut of what is ostensibly a series of late-1960s/early-1970s Archie cartoons being turned into comic stories.

The story itself is hardly high art, even by Riverdale standards, but it is decidedly different. The tale is longer than the token new stories typically used to lead off digests, so that's nice. It may appeal to us old fogies who actually buy the comics for our kids. And it's cross-marketing with all the old Archie cartoons now on DVD.

Other stories in this collection are the usual mix: The boys learn that cheerleading is hard work; Archie goes undercover as a notorious practical joker; gang members envision themselves as counterparts of The Fantastic (or, rather, Phenom) Four. You know the drill.

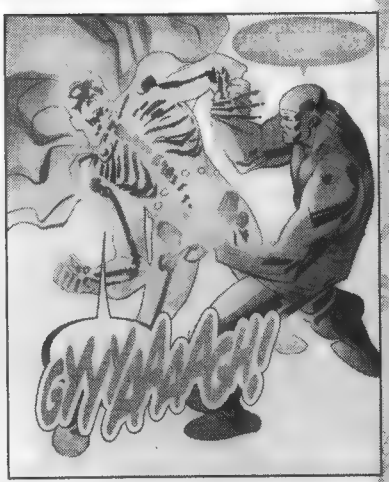
It's nice to have something truly different that still feels familiar. It's like *Ultimate All-Star Archie Unlimited Adventures*. Let's hope Josie and Sabrina's cartoons get the same treatment.

www.archiecomics.com

New Thunderbolts #16

Marvel

$2.99, color, 32 pgs., available now
Writer: Fabian Nicieza
Artists: Rick Leonardi, Cam Smith
reviewed by **George Nelson** ★★★



Unexpected twists and turns have been the hallmark of this title since the first issue of its earlier incarnation, and this issue follows that tradition, as it delves into the motivations of the reconstituted Squadron Sinister. Though out for world conquest, the new Doctor Spectrum and Hyperion — here attempting to recruit original members Nighthawk and the former Whizzer, now the T-bolts' not-quite-reformed Speed Demon — appear to be acting out of what they believe are noble reasons.

Fabian Nicieza, if anything, has upped the tension between T-bolts still wavering between redemption and villainy and those acting more altruistically, with shifting lineups and allegiances keeping this series unpredictable and usually intriguing. The revelation of the force behind The Squadron's reformation, an unanticipated but logical character, plays into another long-established tradition of this title: its attention to Marvel history. The addition of Nighthawk to The T-bolts' ranks could be a good fit for the character and the series.

www.marvel.com

X-Men: Colossus Bloodline #1

Marvel

$2.99, color, 48 pgs., available now
Writer: David Hine
Artist: Jorge Lucas
reviewed by **Brett Weiss** ★★★

Fans wanting yet another comic book starring an individual member of Marvel's mutant superteam should be interested in *X-Men: Colossus Bloodline* #1 (of 5), a fairly compelling mystery in which a scary-looking masked figure is committing a series of related (so to speak), horribly grisly murders. Pencil and ink artist Jorge Lucas, fresh off the "House of M" story arc in *The Incredible Hulk*, does a fine job evoking the depressing tone of the script by delivering visuals that would feel at home in one of Vertigo's horror titles.

Even more interesting than the mystery elements of the tale is the further development of the title character, who, as True Believers know, was brought back to life (to make a long story short) within the pages of Joss Whedon's *Astonishing X-Men*. Suffering inner turmoil and nightmares as a result of his imprisonment, Colossus doesn't quite feel himself (literally and figuratively). The interaction between Colossus, Kitty Pryde, and Emma Frost shows that writer David Hine understands the current state of these heroes well.

www.marvel.com

Bomb Queen #1

Image

$3.50, color, 28 pgs., available now
Writer and artist: Jimmie Robinson
reviewed by **Ray Sidman** ★★★

As unlikely as it sounds, creator Jimmie Robinson may have actually raised the bar for risqué outfits with his title character. Bomb Queen must have pretty much altered her curvaceous anatomy to make the costume — how shall I say? — fit within the most liberal of decency laws. This isn't necessarily a bad thing; just note that the "Mature Readers" label is there for this and other reasons.

Fortunately, the series has lots more going for it than mere costume awe. It's a nice spin on the bad-guys-sometimes-win monorail. The flagrantly evil and sadistic Bomb Queen has won time and again through the years in both fisticuffs and life's games of chance and appears to be in no danger of losing. You won't cheer for her (well, not in church, anyway), but you're likely to smile, as she graphically bludgeons her way to and through whatever fun she wants to have whenever the fancy strikes her.

Robinson's writing is stronger than his art, but both provide the desired effect of any first issue: making the reader look forward to the next issue.

www.imagecomics.com

Catwoman #50

DC

$2.50, color, 32 pgs., available now
Writer: Will Pfeifer
Artist: Pete Woods
reviewed by **George Nelson** ★★½

In this title's 50th issue, fans get an explanation for Selina Kyle's shift from villain to anti-hero — maybe more of an explanation than was necessary.

Capably illustrated by Pete Woods, this issue's revelation that Catwoman — never one of Batman's more bloodthirsty foes — was among those mindwiped by Zatanna actually calls into question how effective the mindwipes were, at least in this case. Portrayed as more of an anti-hero in recent years, she still has spent most of the time since the mindwipe as one of the world's premier thieves, albeit one with a "thing" for The Dark Knight, and writer Will Pfeifer never explains why Selina's conversion seemed to happen so long after the encounter with The JLA shown here in flashback. (Readers might reasonably wonder if *any* of DC's supposedly reformed villains did so of their own volition.)

That said, the issue offers a satisfying, memorable confrontation between Catwoman and Zatanna, who reverses her spell. Uncertain how she feels after the revelation, Selina understandably lashes out at the magician, but the former JLAer regains the upper hand. The tantalizing ending leaves readers wondering what path Selina will take with her new knowledge.

www.dccomics.com

I (Heart) Marvel: My Mutant Heart #1

Marvel

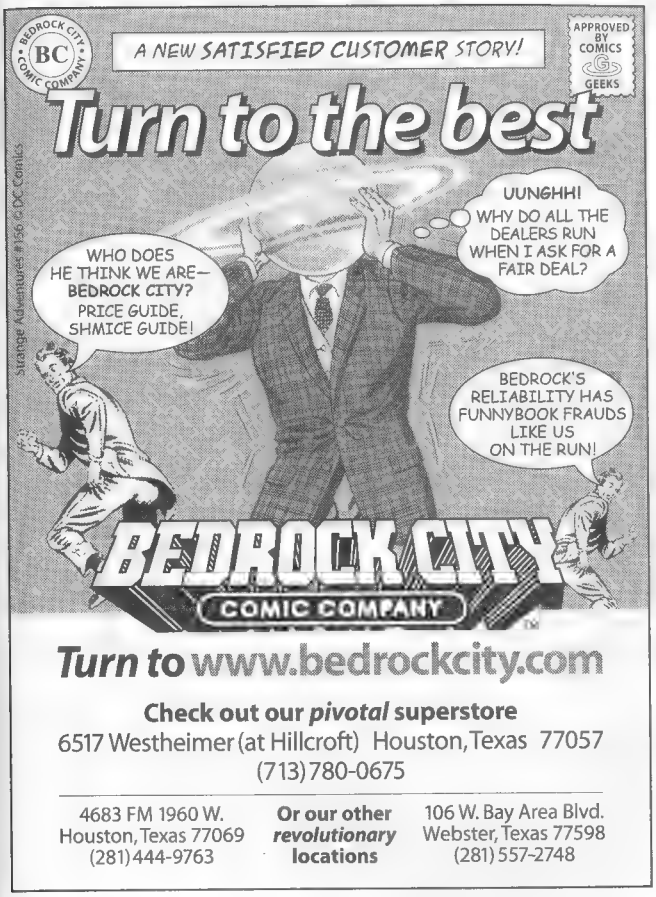
$2.99, color, 32 pgs., available now
Writers and artists: Various
reviewed by **S.A. Bennett** ★★

Unfortunately, this theoretical romance anthology is more misses than hits. I hadn't been impressed with Daniel Way's published work, but he contributes not only a solid Wolverine story (which in and of itself is tough to pull off), but one that also works as a romance in the best sense of the word.

You'd think a romance story from Peter Milligan would at least have the advantage of being original, but instead he contributes a *film noir* detective/shaggy-dog story focusing on that most unpalatable of mutants, Doop (sadly, the cover features Doop manga style in a French maid's outfit), with an ending that makes you go, "Ew," instead of, "Aw."

Written and drawn by Tim Fish, "My Girlfriend the Thief" features Chris Claremont's most ridiculous, over-hyphenated X-character Lila Cheney (the mutant rock-star space-traveling super-thief), although, in the hands of Fish, she's picked up a pair of art-school girl glasses and is doing a spot-on Lisa Loeb impression.

www.marvel.com



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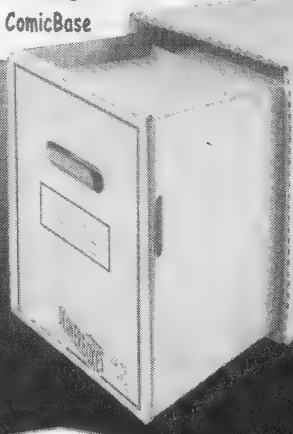

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Batman and The Monster Men #1-2

DC

$2.99@, color, 40 pgs.@, available now
Writer and artist: Matt Wagner
reviewed by **S.A. Bennett** ★★★½

Matt Wagner goes back to the earliest days of Batman to retell, in his signature elegant, slightly retro style, one of his earliest adventures, in which The Dark Knight went from facing gangsters and thugs to dealing with fiendish creations of mad scientist Dr. Hugo Strange.

These have been lean days for Batman fans, the "character" currently appearing in DC comics being all but unrecognizable to those who know him best. But it's clear that, not only does Matt Wagner "get" the character, he gets him *right*.

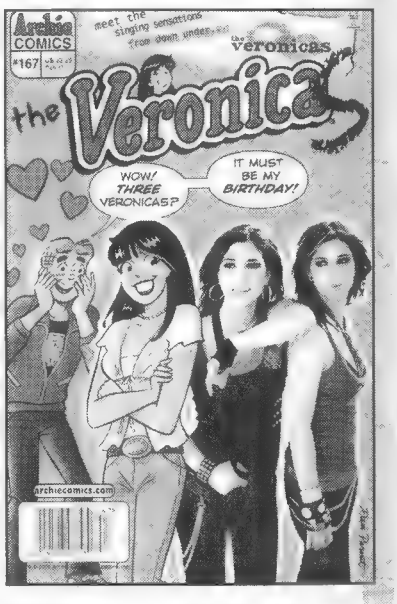
The art is wonderfully moody and the story full of moments likely to surprise today's readers — as when Batman actually pauses to talk to a crime victim. But what's most memorable about these issues is that Bruce Wayne is given something to do, looks smashing in a tuxedo, and even sleeps with his girlfriend Julie Madison. (Which is refreshing, since you get the distinct impression today's Batman has zero interest in women.)

www.dccomics.com

Veronica #167

Archie

$2.25, color, 32 pgs., available now
Writers: Dan Parent, Mike Pellowski
Artists: Parent, Pellowski, Jim Amash
reviewed by **Tim Lasiuta** ★★½



"Hey, hey, it's The Veronicas?" I thought it was The Archies? But that was another time. Now, when The Veronicas' tour bus breaks down in the middle of nowhere, their inspiration, Veronica Lodge, comes to their rescue. Not only do they perform a rockin' concert, but they also give Archie a doozie of a problem — three Veronicas!

In other stories, Veronica shows her compassionate side, as she hides from the spotlight at a youth center. Sledding memories become real, as the gang reminisces at their favorite slope and remembers exactly how much fun snow can be.

Gotta wonder though: Is Dan, the helicopter pilot and instructor, writer and penciller Dan Parent in disguise? Those artists will go to any length to get ink! When real characters appear in an Archie comic, it has to be special.

Check out the photo-montage cover, courtesy of Parent: a collectible issue, if ever I have seen one.

www.archiecomics.com

Books of Doom #1-2

Marvel

$2.99@, color, 48 pgs.@, available now
Writer: Ed Brubaker
Artists: Pablo Raimondi, Mark Farmer
reviewed by **George Nelson** ★★★

While the backstory of Doctor Doom is fairly well defined in the broad strokes, Ed Brubaker nonetheless does a laudable job of fleshing out some of the details of the arch-villain's early years. To some extent, this first issue — lavishly brought to life by Raimondi and Farmer — is also the untold story of Doom's parents (particularly his mother), providing insights into why this woman would have put her soul in jeopardy by dealing in the dark arts and why their gypsy band was pursued by authorities.

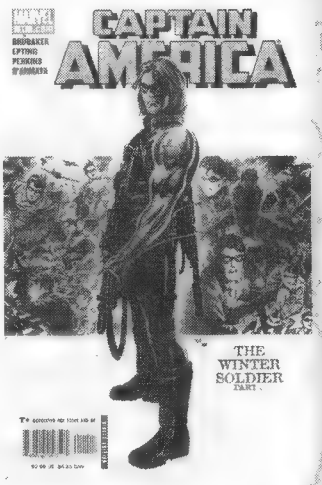
Marvel's arch-villain doesn't need to be portrayed as a sympathetic character here, and that's not what Brubaker seems to be aiming for. But he does provide insight into what would lead Doom to take the path he does in later years, showing in even the young Victor the anger and ruthlessness that would define him in the future. (His melodramatic declaration — "No one dunks von Doom and lives to tell the tale!" — might have been a bit much, though, helping to jar the reader out of a story with few other missteps.)

www.marvel.com

Captain America #11

Marvel

$2.99, color, 32 pgs., available now
Writer: Ed Brubaker
Artists: Steve Epting, Mike Perkins
reviewed by **Tim Lasiuta** ★★★



Ever read a comic book and know it's going to be part of a classic storyline?

"The Winter Soldier" epic running in *Captain America* is just such a story arc. The Winter Soldier dossier goes missing, and someone breaks into Steve Rogers' secret residence but leaves behind a package for which men have died.

Who is The Winter Soldier? This issue answers many questions but, more importantly, raises a larger one. What do you do with knowledge that turns your entire past upside down?

Ed Brubaker has written a masterful story. I have always loved Captain America, from the days of Steve Englehart, Jack Kirby, and John Byrne. This plot line has matched them.

I can see it now:

Brubaker to editor: "What if we tell a story about what happened to Bucky Barnes? And he's not as lucky as Cap?"

Editor: "Yeah, why not?"

Here we are. And the results are outstanding. Steve Epting draws one mean Captain America. His cover for this issue pays tribute to Barnes' past in the style of Joe Simon and Jack Kirby.

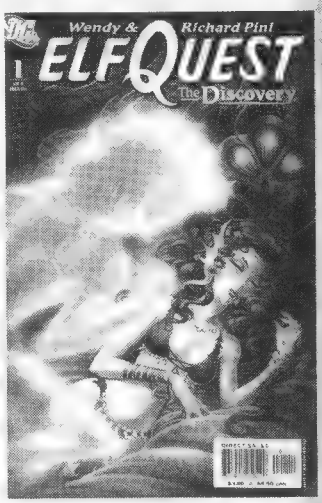
As they say in Hollywood, that's entertainment!

www.marvel.com

Elfquest: The Discovery #1

DC

$3.99, color, 40 pgs., available now
Writers: Wendy and Richard Pini
Artist: Wendy Pini
reviewed by **Michael Tierney** ★★★



After a certain Canadian aardvark hung up his sword, *Elfquest* became the longest-running independent comic still publishing new stories, albeit now under the DC logo. The romance between the Wolf-Rider chief, Cutter, and his lifemate Leetah, was the core of the story from the beginning and remains so today, albeit with the focus now shifting to encompass their children and other supporting characters.

"The Discovery" is a four-part mini-series that quickly updates the reader, as previous storylines start to interweave. Cutter's son Suntop, now called Sunstream, hibernates in a healing cocoon inside the Crystal Palace of the High Ones. His soul has gone on many journeys and may have discovered the recognition of his one true love among the Waverider elves living beneath the sea. And that's not the only romance to be found.

With so many characters and so much going on, it might be a little confusing to a first-time reader. But with patience and attention to detail, such potential audience members should climb quickly on board.

And no one draws cuter elves than Wendy Pini!

www.dccomics.com

Superman Secret Files 2005

DC

$4.99, color, 48 pgs., available now
Writers and artists: Various
reviewed by **George Nelson** ★★★

So, who's better: Superman or Batman? Devin Grayson presents an entertaining take on this familiar schoolyard argument in the lead story, which centers on two boys each arguing for his favorite (at times visually taking on the personas of their idols in a clever bit of business by artist Ariel Olivetti). While not much new ground is explored, the tale presents an intriguing look at how the roles of these two characters — and super-heroes in general — are seen by the public.

This *Secret Files* also features a tale focusing on Lois Lane's reaction to losing the first Superman story to "that newbie nebbish clunk-head" Clark Kent — which tries to meld *Man of Steel* and *Superman: Birthright* to some extent — and an amusing "Bizarro: Birthwrong" two-pager.

In addition, there are new profile pages, including an intriguing look at the mystery of the apparent two Luthors and the new Fortress. On her profile page, though, Lois looks more like Kristin Kreuk (Lana on *Smallville*).

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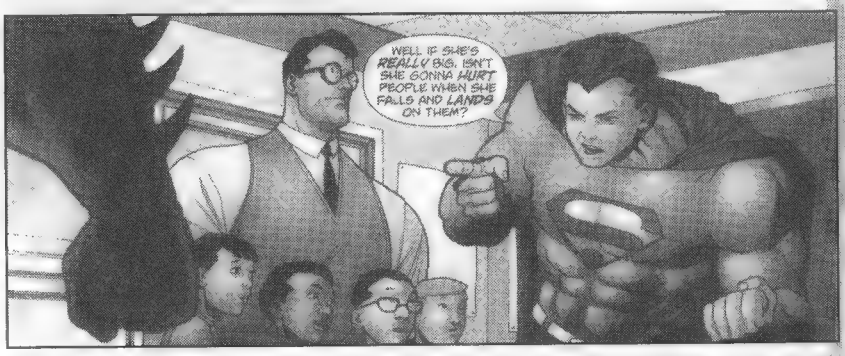
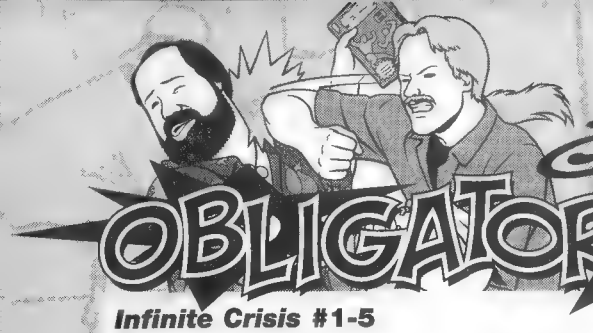




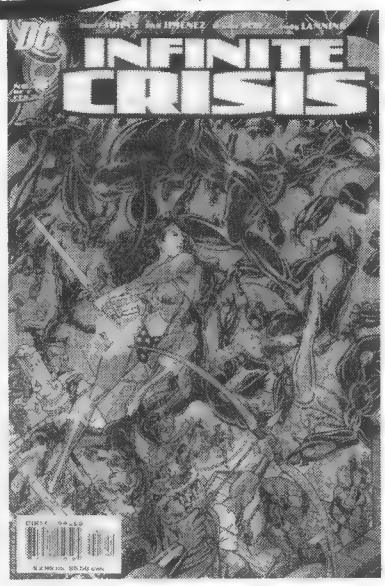
Sometimes our reviewers just don't agree!

OBLIGATORY FIGHT SCENE!

Infinite Crisis #1-5

DC

$3.99@, color, 40 pgs.@, available now
Writer: Geoff Johns
Artists: Phil Jimenez, Andy Lanning, and others
discussed by **Jim Johnson and John Petty**



Jim Johnson: You know, here I thought I was growing out of my fanboy phase. But leave it to Geoff Johns, Phil Jimenez, and company to evoke the exact same kind of childlike wonderment and awe that Marv Wolfman and George Pérez did with *Crisis on Infinite Earths* more than 20 years ago. So eye-popping and jaw-dropping is this wonderfully fun and thrilling epic that I thought the rest of my face was going to fall off, as well. By addressing head-on the recent moral dilemmas within the DC universe and their potentially continuity-altering implications, this is one event storyline that actually exceeds its hype. Even a crotchety Boy Scout like you can't deny that.

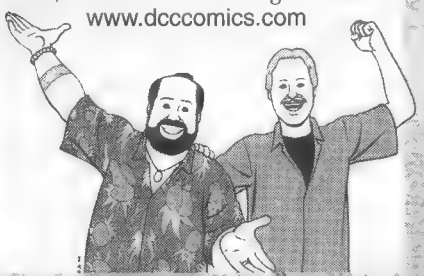
John Petty: Fun? If you think this is fun, I bet you'd really get a laugh out of televised executions. All this series does is send DC further down the dark, depressing road it's been treading for years. I had high hopes for *IC* but, after reading these issues, I have to say things are worse than ever. Iconic heroes have become insane, murderous thugs; people die for no apparent reason (other than to satisfy DC's bloodlust); and you find this "fun"? I guess your definition of "fun" and mine are light years apart, then. More and more, the DC universe has become a place that I just don't want to be, and I'm afraid this series may mark my last regular visit to a place I've always loved.

Johnson: Unclench, my friend; you'll pop an artery. Maybe you missed the explanation of Power Girl's origin. Or Superman-2 confronting Batman. Or the apparent return of Earth-2. I sure had a lot of fun reading all that. But, once again, your unhealthy obsession with the body count has gotten in the way of you being able to do the same. In case you missed it, the story is addressing *exactly* what's been troubling you (and many other DC fans) about its universe becoming a bad place to be. The battle and moral differences between "our" Superman and that of Earth-2 almost mirror the ongoing debate in fandom. It carries an ironic kind of brilliance that can't be anything but fun. You really should be enjoying this, even if it's just to admire the gorgeous visuals from Jimenez, George Pérez, *etc.*

Petty: Yeah, I guess that somewhere in between Phantom Girl getting shish-kebabed between the cleavage and Pantha getting her head popped off by an enraged Superboy, I missed all that "fun" you're referring to. Paying lip service to the moral and ethical problems that have plagued the DC universe for years and actually *doing* something about it are two different things in my book. The body count in this series that you accuse me of being obsessed with is death of the worst kind: gratuitous and senseless. It's pandering to fanboys who want to prove how "adult" they are by wallowing in death and mayhem. I'm not saying that comics have to be all light and happy, but the anti-heroic trend that DC has bought into recently, and that they're perpetuating here (by making Superman-2 and Superboy-Prime the main villains), is just sad and pathetic. Ask yourself this: Do the deaths in *IC* make the DC universe a better place? If the answer is, "No," then why do it in the first place?

Johnson: Well, it depends on what you mean by "better." Like it or not, the purpose of the DC universe isn't to be a bright and sunny place for its inhabitants to live; its purpose is to provide potential readers a wealth of characters and settings that will entice them to buy DC comics. Judging by the recent sales, people are doing that. No way would I want to live in today's DC universe, but I sure love reading about it.

www.dcccomics.com



Batman: Gotham Knights #74

DC

$2.50, color, 32 pgs., available now
Writer: A.J. Lieberman
Artists: Diego Olmos, Bit
reviewed by **Tim Lasiuta** ★★★

As *Batman: Gotham Knights* comes to a close, Batman faces a crossroads.

"The road to Hell is paved with good intentions," Batman reflects, as he surveys Gotham from a familiar rooftop. "That's all I have left."

The Joker once again sabotages the citizens of Gotham — in particular, those with pacemakers installed by David Gilmour and Tommy Elliot. Adjusting the frequency of an emitter puts the victims at the mercy of The Joker.

Hush ticked the trickster off once too often, and revenge is sweet, especially when he discovers a faulty pacemaker in his chest. Self-surgery is not the answer, so he turns to Bruce and finds himself at Arkham Asylum.

"To kill or not to kill," asks Batman, as Hush threatens to do what Batman cannot do. What is "right" and what is "wrong"? Who can judge? Can Batman allow The Joker to be killed? Are good intentions enough?

For a last issue, it is outstanding. The art is suitably mysterious and fits the moral overtones of "Payback Part II" to a T.

www.dccomics.com

Son of M #1-2

Marvel

$2.99@, color, 32 pgs.@, available now
Writer: David Hine
Artists: Roy Allen Martinez
reviewed by **George Nelson** ★★★

His personality defined by his powers as much as anything else, former speedster Quicksilver now finds himself forced to live life at the pace of those he previously held in contempt — normal human and superhuman alike — in the aftermath of "House of M."

David Hine's story convincingly portrays the plight of the former mutant and Avenger, typically an unsympathetic character (arrogant is one of the more polite words used over the years to describe Pietro), as he endures — at a snail's pace compared to his former existence — life's ordinary indignities as well as a beating at the hands of common thugs he would previously have dealt with in an instant, instead being rescued by Spider-Man. He gets no sympathy, however, from the normally easygoing hero, still haunted by the memories of the life he lost in the undoing of the "House of M."

Roy Allen Martinez' illustrations, aided by the tones employed by color artist Pete Pantazis, perfectly suit this tale, skillfully conveying the mundaneness of the life Pietro is living.

www.marvel.com

Marvel Romance Redux: But I Thought He Loved Me

Marvel

$2.99, color, 32 pgs., available now
Writers and artists: Various
reviewed by **S.A. Bennett** ★★★

Taking old comics and replacing the word balloons with theoretically humorous text seems like an easy enough way to get cheap laughs, but, as we've seen with Keith Giffen's recent *What Were They Thinking?* it's not as easy as it looks. Which is why we're lucky these old Marvel romances stories don't just get the patented John Lustig *Last Kiss* process, they get John Lustig himself.

Naturally, it's his entry, "I Was a Beach Blanket Barbarian," that's the highlight of the issue, though his words have to compete with incredible Jack Kirby art. And Jeff Parker hits one out of the park with "President Stripper," which also gives the rare opportunity of seeing John Romita Sr. inks over John Buscema pencils.

This is funny stuff, but it should be noted that, while sometimes extremely dated, the original material deserves respect. If you can set aside preconceptions about "stupid girls' comics," you can judge for yourself by reading the stories as originally published in the *Marvel Romance* trade paperback.

www.marvel.com

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REVIEWS

Edu-Manga: Helen Adams Keller

Digital Manga

$9.95, b/w, 168 pgs., available now

Writer: Sozo Yanagawa; Artist: Rie Yagi

reviewed by **Jack Abramowitz** ★★★★

PICK OF THE INDY MONTH

Now, *this* is what it's all about! Astro Boy, a character as iconic in Japan as Superman and Mickey Mouse in the United States, hosts a series of educational biographies, starting here with Helen Keller.

The story is inspiring on many levels. First, there's Helen herself. Blind and deaf from infancy, she learned to communicate, attended Radcliffe, and became an accomplished author and lecturer. Then, there's Anne Sullivan, the acclaimed "miracle worker" who broke Helen's barriers. These stories stand on their own.

After each chapter, Astro and Dr. Elefun discuss the salient points and make them more relevant to readers' lives.

This is the way to make learning fun: provide gripping tales told in an easily digested format. The addition of popular characters certainly doesn't hurt any!

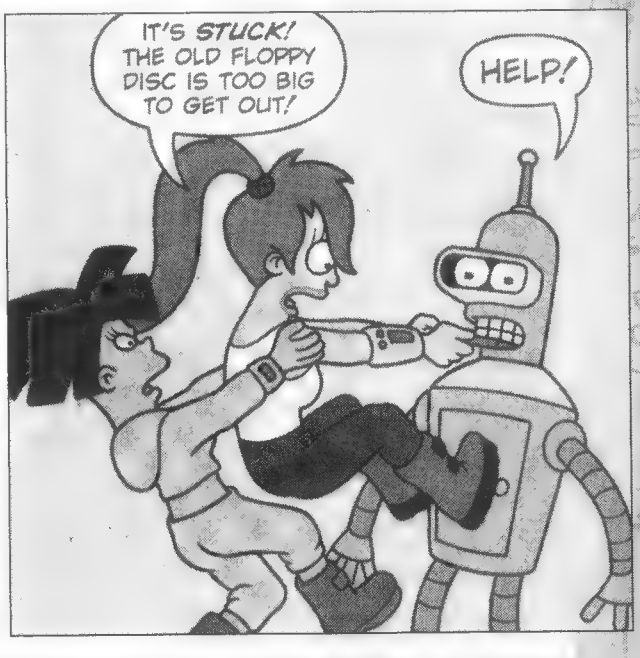
The volume advertises additional entries in the series, including Einstein, Beethoven, Anne Frank, and Mother Theresa. These should not only be devoured by comics fans, they should be given to kids with all haste. With any luck, the volumes should find their way into classrooms and school libraries.

www.dmpbooks.com
ISBN 1-56970-976-9

Futurama Comics #22

Bongo

$2.99, color, 32 pgs., available now
Writer: Ian Boothby; Artist: Mike Kalazen
reviewed by **S.A. Bennett** ★★



In this issue, Bender decides to market his terrible cooking as a weight-loss product, leading him to be made Czar of Physical Fitness by Richard Nixon's head. Then, he uses his new powers to turn New New York into a forced work camp, but it all turns out OK except for the population of the planet Krypton (which actually makes sense when you read the story).

If you've missed following the adventures of the turgid crew of the *Planet Express Ship* since the cancellation of the TV show, you'll find this Bongo comic better than nothing, but barely. While the jokes and situations are cozily familiar, the characters seem strangely lifeless, demonstrating not a bit of the depth seen on the animated version. And, while the art's adequate, somewhere it's coupled with coloring that makes the figures begin to look like slightly compressed Colorforms.

Oddly enough, the best part is the wonderfully old-fashioned cover (which looks as if it should be symbolic, but something similar actually takes place in the story) with its big, legible logo.

Gory Lori #1

Chanting Monks Press

$2.50, b/w, 32 pgs., available now
Writer: Joseph M. Monks
Artists: Jeff Salisbury, Mike Koneful
reviewed by **Brett Weiss** ★★½

Gory Lori is the type of story we've all seen before. Some type of unnamed plague has spread across the country, ravaging most of humanity, leaving corpses and zombies in its wake. So far, at least two people remain unblemished by the scourge, including the title character — a bosomy babe with a fondness for gunplay and her trusty Triumph motorcycle. The other survivor is a bespectacled, ball-capped boy who hitches a ride with Lori, since he hasn't seen another living human being in weeks, making for a potentially interesting odd couple.

Lori's personality is overly acerbic at times, but the issue as a whole strikes a nice balance between humor and horror. Amidst the gruesome zombie deaths and projectile vomiting, readers will find a plethora of pun-filled product names (such as "Ape Nuts" and "Cap'n Crotch") and T-shirt emblems. More important, the art frequently evokes classic *Mad* magazine.

Gory Lori is a fearful, yet funny, take on a familiar premise.

www.chantingmonks.com

Anthem #1

Heroic Publishing

$3.25, color, 32 pgs., available now
Writer: Roy Thomas
Artist: Daniel Acuna
reviewed by **Ray Sidman** ★★★

When I first heard about *Anthem*, what really got me jazzed was the fact that legendary writer Roy Thomas was at the helm. This issue has a lot of things going for it, but Thomas is the best reason to buy it.

Thomas' story tells of an alternate universe in which the Germans won World War II, and America's greatest heroes — waking up from a lab-induced hibernation — are just finding that out.

The book has a Silver Age feel, with such super-hero names as "Stonewall" Jackson, Dawns Earlylight, Bomb-Burst, Liberty, "Rockets" Redglare, and the duo known as (what else?) Stars and Stripes. Adding to the feel is the way the art is presented; Acuña's art complements the story's strengths well.

The annoying distraction is the pixellated art. It is literally noticeably pixellated in every panel. Intended gimmick or not, it didn't appeal to me.

Still, beyond the pixels, the issue is a good one. Enthusiasts particularly will want to check out the six-page article in the back of the issue in which Roy Thomas explains his vision of the world of *Anthem*.

www.heroicpub.com

Toxic Teddies #1

Terminal Press

$3.50, b/w, 24 pgs., available now
Writers: Steve Ruddy, Brian Ferrara
Artist: Rolo Ledesma
reviewed by **Jim Johnson** ★★½

This would have been right at home amongst the mid-'80s independent comics glut, but this better-than-average effort would have been lost amid all of that era's garbage. Not that it isn't lost amid today's glut of comics but, ironically, it stands out almost as a tribute, 20 years later, to gems like Eastman and Laird's *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles* or James Dean Smith's *Boris the Bear*.

The toxic teddies, of course, are the byproduct of a toxic-wasté spill that occurs at a teddy-bear factory. And these sick, depraved, and not-so-cuddly bears take on the personalities of other, well-known, and not-so-cuddly pop-culture figures, among them Jason and Leatherface. And, of course, their first story involves a merciless hunt for none other than a seemingly harmless unicorn.

Strangely enough, Steve Ruddy and Brian Ferrara's pleasantly twisted story is oddly complemented by Rolo Ledesma's deceptively innocent-looking art; innocent-looking, at least, until one of these teddies shows its true nature or brandishes its weapons. This is one sick and vile comic — and we wouldn't want it any other way.

www.terminalpress.com

Angel: Old Friends #1-2

IDW Publishing

$3.99@, color, 32 pgs.@, available now
Writer: Jeff Mariotte
Artist: David Messina
reviewed by **Brett Weiss** ★★½

Angel: Old Friends finds everyone's favorite vampire with a soul taking a break from demon slaying and world-saving. Holed up in a cabin in the snowy mountains, Angel just wants to be left alone. Unfortunately for him, ex-partner Charles Gunn invades his sanctuary with a simple request: to help him take down a familiar-looking vampire who is terrorizing the streets of L.A. While in Southern California, they hook up with a pair of former colleagues and battle a particularly fearsome creature.

Fans of the dearly departed *Angel* television series will find these issues agreeable enough, since the snarky dialogue (left over from *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*) remains intact and the characters look and behave about as they should. The art, though sparse at times and rarely better than ordinary, does manage to capture the basic likenesses of David Boreanaz, J. August Richards, and company. Regrettably, the plot is simplistic in the extreme and sadly missing much of the richness and moral ambiguity found in some of the better episodes of the show.

www.idwpublishing.com

Cedric the Dragon Slayer

Outcast Studios

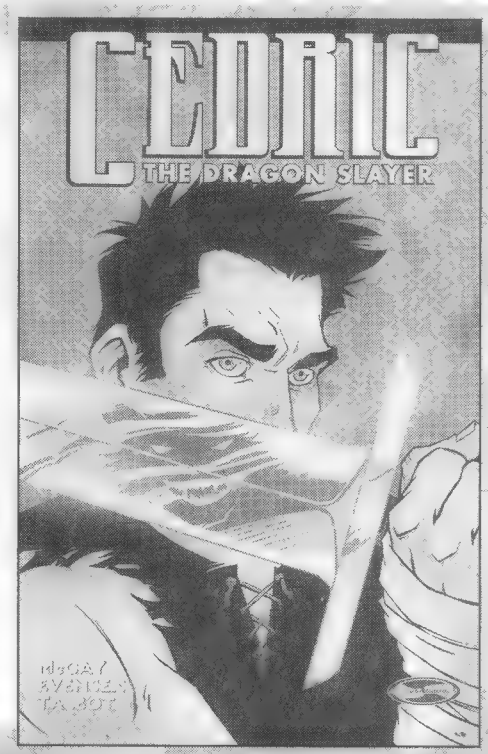
No cover price, b/w, 8 pgs., available now
Writer: Christopher McCay; Artist: Erik Evensen
reviewed by **Tony DiGerolamo** ★★★

This preview provides a glimpse into the fantasy world of Cedric. A tribe of werewolves are being hunted by local villagers. Cedric meets them and is outraged at the villagers' callousness. Taking up the tribe's cause, Cedric interferes, but his actions may cause more harm than good. McCay weaves a tale with moral ambiguity. Not everything in Cedric's world is black and white (so to speak). This gives Cedric's world more depth than the average D&D-campaign-turned-into-a-fantasy-comic comic book.

Erik Evensen's art is good but could use more backgrounds in a few of the panels. For a guy who's traveling in a medieval world, Cedric travels light: no backpack or provisions, just a couple of weapons and some clothes. It might've been nice to see a dragon in a dragon-slayer comic book, but it remains a solid comic book. Outcast is also affiliated with *IMPH* and *Johnny Raygun*.

The $2 cover price for this that the creators charged at a show seemed steep for a preview, but the full issue should be worth checking out.

www.outcaststudios.com



Caveman Robot #1

Tetragrammatron Press

$2.50, color, 32 pgs., available now

Writers: Jason Robert Bell, Britton Walters; Artist: Joe Infurnari

reviewed by **Jack Abramowitz** ★★

From the cover, it seems Caveman Robot lives in caveman times — and, from the introduction, it would seem that he (it?) has been around that long. The action, however, presumably occurs in the present day in what appears to be a parallel reality. (The presence of airborne policemen suggests that it's not the here and now.)

Caveman Robot is revered by his contemporaries, but not much is revealed about him. He's the strong, silent type. He can speak, but he says less in the entirety of the issue than he does in the back-page gag strip (by Scott Shaw). His more verbose nemesis, Ape Lincoln, is also something of an enigma.

The story is not quite as gripping as one might expect from a battle between a robot caveman and a simian Lincoln. On the other hand, the art is skillfully rendered, with subtle and evocative coloring. (In the absence of other credits, we must assume that the colors are the work of artist Infurnari.)

It might be worth watching where *Caveman Robot* goes.

www.cavemanrobot.com

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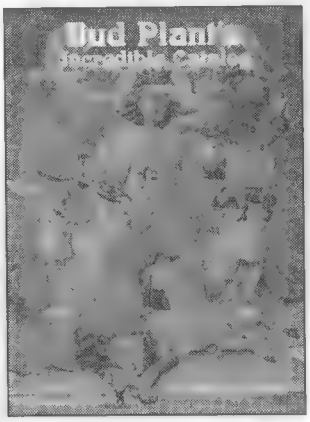

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Lookit Vol. 1: A Cheese Related Mishap and Other Stories

Don't Eat Any Bugs Productions

$8.95, b/w, 96 pgs., available now

Writer and artist: Ray Friesen

reviewed by **Jack Abramowitz** ★★½

This is different. But it's got ninja chickens, a cynical penguin, and lots of cheese, so what's not to like?

A Cheese Related Mishap is a kid-friendly graphic novella that doesn't rely on cartoon tie-ins. The humor is sophomoric, but there are still a couple of good chuckles, even for adults. The art is simple but not unskilled. Parts are radically clever.

Protagonist Raymond Q. Wonderful is eclipsed by Mellville the penguin. Mellville is self-centered and apathetic, but he doesn't come across as callous or mean-spirited like Dogbert, or even Garfield, even when displaying a general disregard for human life.

The "Other Stories" in this collection include Captain Cautious, an uptight super-hero who works for a millionaire sheep, and Western birds who form a vaudeville act. Say what you like about creator Friesen; he has original ideas.

He's also 17. Aside from the clever ideas and artistic talent, you have to give him props for creating something so friendly and approachable when many of his peers would be crafting comics featuring large-breasted, gun-toting bimbos.

www.donteatanybugs.com

ISBN 0-9728177-6-X

Bomad #3

Rebecca Sugar

$5, b/w, 34 pgs., available now

Writer: Rebecca Sugar

Artist: Sugar

reviewed by **Tony DiGerolamo** ★½

Bomad is in a different format from a standard comic book. Rebecca Sugar's art style is like a less frantic version of Jamie Hewlett's Tank Girl. The inking is a little heavy, but the characters' faces are expressive. While her designs are enjoyable, her style makes it difficult to discern the characters' ages, since they all look like kids.

The characters are cute and quirky, but their quirkiness overwhelms everything. It's as if Sugar loves her characters *so* much, by the time she's done introducing them she's forgotten to get to the point. This story is about awkward teens trying to get through life in the big city. (I think.)

Still, it was interesting, much like watching an episode of *FLCL* (*Fooly-Cooly*) on Cartoon Network. I was entertained and confused at the same time. Maybe there's a layer of subtlety here that escapes me, but I think it's probably a case of a new talent exploring the medium. It probably needed a seasoned editor to identify important bits and lower the cover price.

www.skulltula.com

Opposite Forces #3

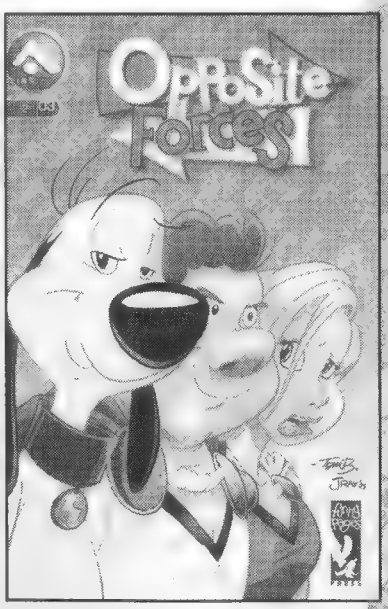
Alias

$2.99, color, 24 pgs., available now

Writer: Tom Bancroft

Artists: Bancroft, Cedric Hohnstadt

reviewed by **Tim Lasiuta** ★★★



Continuing from last issue, Alexis and Marty wake up from a bad dream. The dog, Bopper, is talking! But is it really a bad dream? Nope, bad day but not bad dream.

How do "normal" folks deal with transferred super-hero powers? As Captain Dynamo now resides in the psychiatric ward, and his faithful manservant Alfred is having a tough day, the trio of Alexis, Marty, and Bopper are about to experience life as super-heroes. It could be fun, except for one thing: Their powers only work if they are within 100 yards of each other.

Former Disney and Big Idea animator Tom Bancroft has a winner on his hands. With the appeal of Saturday-morning cartoons and big adventure, this is one 12-issue series that will be fantastic. Humor, charm, clean art, and a little bit of attitude are only three reasons readers will like this comic.

www.aliascomics.net

Airshell #1

Americanime

$3.50, b/w, 24 pgs., available now

Writer and artist: Lia Fiengo

reviewed by **Jack Abramowitz** ★★

The premise is interesting enough: It's the future. Pollution has so devastated society that the slightest increase could be disastrous. Accordingly, there's no more air travel. Or that's what they would have people believe. Ever since he was a boy, René has believed that the sky looks too small. (As an adult, he also has issues with the route the authorities claim the subway follows.) Are we entering a *Truman Show*-like reality?

Interesting though it is, that may not be enough. It has 19 pages of story that the reader can blow through quickly. There's no color. $3.50 is not outrageous for a comic book by any stretch, but it's not cheap. There just might not be enough meat on the bones.

The art is attractive, although René is dressed like Edward Scissorhands for no apparent reason. The paper quality is surprisingly good. It's a nice issue, and the story is worth a look. But a lesser-quality, manga-style collection might be financially more enticing than the current product.

www.americanimeproductions.com

Lost Squad #1-2

Devil's Due Publishing

$2.95@, b/w, 32 pgs.@, available now

Writer: Chris Kirby

Artists: Alan Robinson, Jaime Castro

reviewed by **Ray Sidman** ★★½

Good ol' ballyhoo World War II action with a dose of magic and the supernatural to complement the entertaining over-the-top action — that's the Lost Squad.

The Lost Squad is a small group of Allied soldiers who are good at what they do (or perhaps merely expendable); as a result, they get the bizarre assignments in the battle against the Third Reich's military machine. The tongue-in-cheek humor and the more serious elements (two consistencies of war: tragedy and regret) help make the story a decent showing, making this book worth reading.

Writer Chris Kirby has constructed a story that, while not altogether original, certainly entertains and keeps a rapid pace, as a book like this should. The art by penciller Alan Robinson and inker Jaime Castro fits the genre beautifully.

Perhaps most importantly, the end of each issue makes the reader wonder what will come next: a yardstick measure of good books. Find Lost Squad at your nearby comics store and see if you don't get caught up in the supernatural action.

www.devilsdue.net

Evolution Book 1

Terminus Media

$2.95, b/w, 40 pgs., available now

Writers and artists: Various

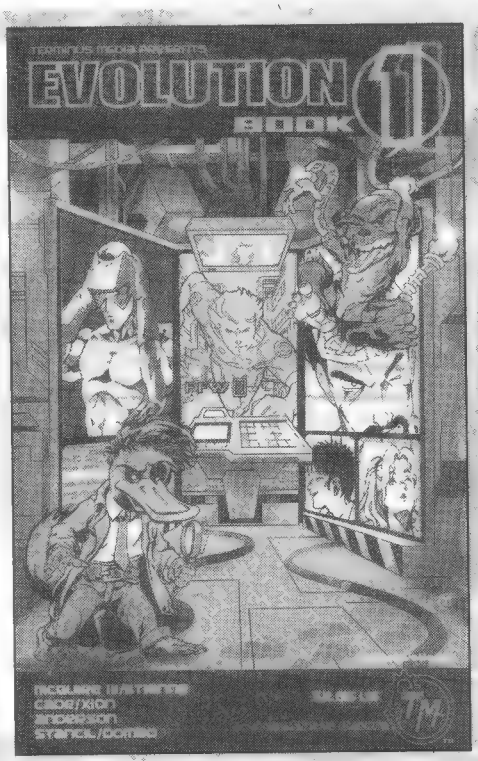
reviewed by **Tony DiGerolamo** ★★★½

Yes, you read correctly, *Evolution* Book 1 is 40 black-and-white story pages for $2.95. *Evolution* is an anthology of mostly super-hero stories. "The God That Failed" is about super-powers and addiction. "Makings of a Hero" is a standard super-hero story. "Modern Thieves" has a look similar to *Strangers in Paradise* but is about a family of thieves in the future and in space. "Shift" is a science-fiction story about rich people turning themselves into cyborgs in the future. Finally, "Tales from the Con Crypt" is a one-panel gag about cons.

It provides a good amount of story for each buck, hitting more often than it misses. The art is good throughout in a variety of styles, so you're bound to find one you like.

Support anthologies; they're just what the medium needs. Terminus Media's website provides a trailer about *Shift* and more information about the many creators featured in *Evolution*.

www.terminusmedia.com

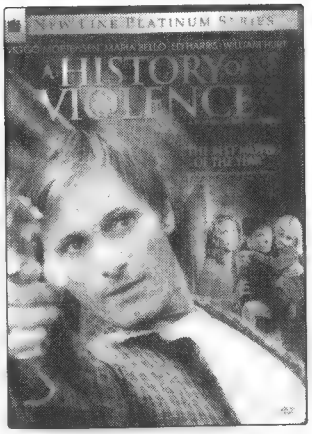


A History of Violence

New Line Home Video

$28.98, 96 mins., available now

reviewed by **Maggie Thompson** ★★★½



The "R" rating is for "strong brutal violence, graphic sexuality, nudity, language, and some drug use." Interestingly, only the strong language and violence originated in the 1997 graphic novel written by John Wagner and drawn by Vince Locke. Also interestingly, it appears that the only person connected with the film (either as creator, performer, or mainstream reviewer) who read that graphic novel was screenwriter Josh Olson. William Hurt received an Oscar nomination for less than 10 minutes of screen time for a character 180° twisted from DC's Paradox version, and admirers of that novel will miss its "history" of the situation, the twists of its plot, and the strength of its wife Edie. As simplified, events are far more predictable. Given that, Director David Cronenberg does a tidy job, and Viggo Mortensen is outstanding in a complex role. Wagner wrote, "How I hate introductions that give away half the story, like reading the last page first." So: The film is excellent, the supporting DVD material is likewise (though, oh! it would have been nice for a minimum of five minutes' discussion from Olson as to why he did what he did). But, once you've watched all of that, grab a copy of the book ($9.99, ISBN 1-56389-367-3). You're in for more surprises.

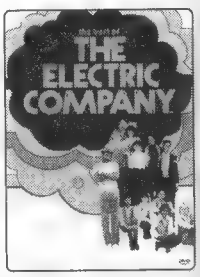
www.newline.com
www.ahistoryofviolence.com (which *does* have samples from the book)
ISBN 0-7806-5409-9

The Best of the Electric Company

Shout! Factory

$49.98, 600 mins./4 DVDs, available now

reviewed by **Ray Sidman** ★★★½



What sets *The Electric Company* apart from even some of the most well-known, long-running, and endearing of children's shows through the years is the passion and superb presentation made possible by *par excellence* writing and acting by such celebrities (and celebrities-to-be) as Bill Cosby, Morgan Freeman, and Rita Moreno. Even as an adult, rewatching these 20 episodes a quarter-century after I watched them as a child, the show's charisma overflows, making it a delight to watch as a child then and as a parent watching it with my children now.

The Electric Company's focus should appeal to comics fans. The show was targeted at ages 6 to 10 with the goal of teaching them to read. Comics are a tool that helps teach children to read, and, once those kids have learned to read, comics open worlds of imagination and entertainment.

Furthermore, for comic-book fans, this set should appeal because of the show's regular (and classic) use of Spider-Man, as well as the occasional Chuck Jones contribution of quickie *Road Runner* cartoons. Both appear on this set.

Lastly, the extras are wonderful. The bloopers in particular will have you laughing out loud many times over.

Shout! Factory knows the appeal the show had to young Gen Xers and is marketing it as a nostalgia set, perhaps because of the standards from the 1970s; Cosby smoking a cigar throughout one lengthy sketch would *never* make it into a children's show today, and for good reason. But that was a different time, and there are so many worthwhile lessons taught by the show that such things don't devalue the set. Each episode is, first and foremost, a valid educational tool.

www.shoutfactory.com
ISBN #: 0-7389-3356-2

Fantastic Four

20th Century Fox

$29.99, 106 mins., available now

reviewed by **Brett Weiss** ★★½

A breezy, lighthearted alternative to the grim-and-gritty nature of such superhero sagas as *Batman Begins* and *Spider-Man* (remember the bloody battle between Spidey and Green Goblin?), *Fantastic Four* is an enjoyable popcorn flick that never takes itself seriously.

Too much time is spent on the origin story (which this time around incorporates Doctor Doom), but, when the costumed characters finally spring into action, the screen sparkles with excitement (and nifty special effects). Ioan Gruffudd's hesitant portrayal of Reed Richards doesn't quite hit the mark, nor does Jessica Alba's Sue Storm, but Chris Evans and Michael Chiklis are fantastic in their respective roles as Johnny Storm and Ben Grimm.

Other than Stan Lee's appearance in the Casting Session, the extras on this disc are lame. Some key cast members provide feature-length commentary (Chiklis, an avowed *FF* fan, is the best commentator), but it's mostly fluff, as is the brief "Making Of" featurette and the unwatchable Fantastic Four Diary (in which the cast goes on a promotional tour). Fun movie, though.

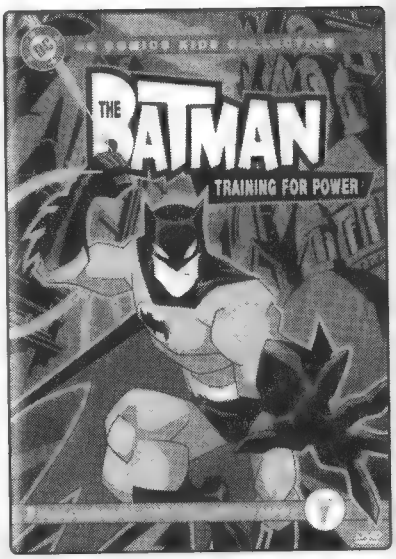
www.fantasticfourdvd.com

The Batman Season 1 Vol. 1

Warner Home Video

$14.97, 60 mins., available now

reviewed by **Oliver Chin** ★★½



The Caped Crusader and his crew are reanimated for the umpteenth time for another generation of TV viewers. The first three episodes of his newest series introduce some of his major criminal nemeses, whom Batman must battle at every turn. First, The Joker turns Arkham Asylum inside out as he prepares to drown Gotham in deadly laughing gas. Next, the muscle-bound Bane plans to break The Dark Knight once and for all. Lastly, The Penguin (aka Oswald Cobblepot) captures Bruce Wayne's butler Alfred and forces him to face the jaws of his hungry feathered friends.

Preceding the latest movie release, this ups the billionaire's hip quotient by mixing in anime-inspired character designs backed by rock 'n' roll theme music by U2's The Edge. Comics artist Jeff Matsuda leads another reinterpretation of Bruce Timm's breakthrough TV adaptation, emphasizing sleeker styling, sharper edges, and short bursts of intense action. Overall, the facelift is solid, though lacking the wry and self-effacing sentimentality that can make this hero more of a man and less a machine.

www.warnerhomevideo.com

Nightveil

Galaxy International Pictures

$24.95, available now

reviewed by **Jack Abramowitz** ★

Nightveil is what an Ed Wood super-hero movie would probably look like. After an interminable credits sequence, viewers are "treated" to special effects that might be appropriate for *Lidsville*, acting not quite that good, and a fight scene lacking only "biff" and "pow" superimposed on the screen.

There's too much wrong with it to itemize. It's implausible that two rejects from *Deliverance* can carry an unseen panther in a cage fit for a hamster. Mary Capps is fetching as The Blue Bulleteer, but the impracticality of high heels for superheroines was never more apparent. Interdimensional wizard Azagoth has a voice more appropriate for a character from *South Park*. Maria Paris, who plays the villainous Alizarin Crimson is the only cast member with acting ability.

The extras are better than the feature. "Cheeseorama" is a mockumentary explaining how the film is intentionally bad to resemble "classic shlock" of the 1950s. Nobody's buying it. (In a real documentary, Bill Black actually apologizes.) "Nightveil's Nightmare Theater" better accomplishes the alleged retro-goal.

www.accomics.com

Aeon Flux: The Complete Animated Collection

Paramount Home Entertainment/MTV Home Video

$38.99, 224 mins., available now

Creator: Peter Chung

reviewed by **Ray Sidman** ★★★

No surprise that, at the same time as the release of the live-action, big-screen adaptation starring Charlize Theron, the powers that be have released this set of the mid-'90s MTV cartoon. Nonetheless, *Flux* fans have waited —patiently — for a decade to see a notable piece of animation history receive this level of treatment. It's been available before — like so many other MTV shows — in compilations of bits and pieces. At long last, here's the complete *Aeon*: shorts, pilot, episodes, extras, all remastered.

Peter Chung's most well-known work has a loyal, frenzied legion of fans who will defend its merits, as good fanatics do. There are also animation fans who see it and say, "So what?" That's why the three-star rating may not be all that accurate: For *Flux* fans, this set is four-star material, no doubt; for animation fans, this is a well-produced set of a show they may not care one whit for.

The often-confusing, always-graphic, sometimes-innovative, and typically deviant animation of *Aeon Flux* is enjoyable, and this is a well-done set in which fans can take pride. If you're a fan, you've already got the set and are merely deciding how worthy this review is.

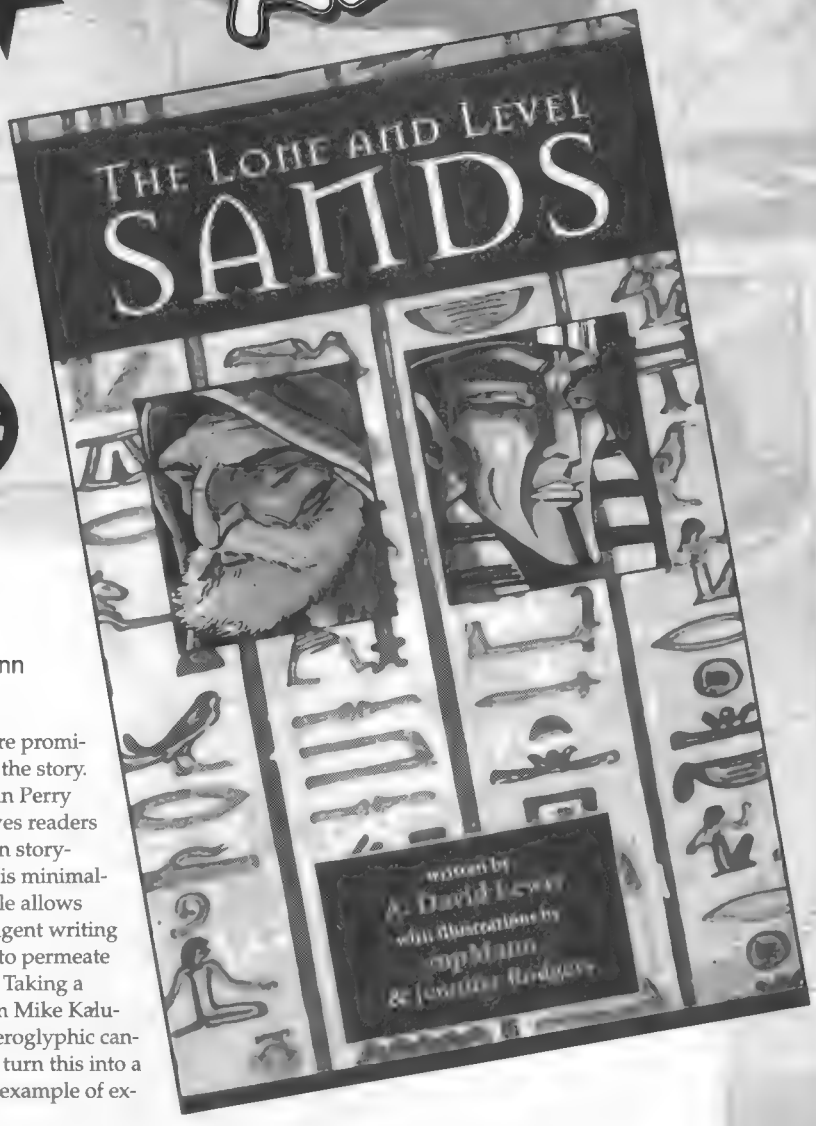
www.paramount.com

www.mtv.com

ISBN #: 1-4157-1416-9

BOUND For Glory

TRADE PAPERBACK AND GRAPHIC NOVEL REVIEWS



PICK OF THE MONTH TPB

The Lone and Level Sands

Archaia Studio Press

$17.95, color, 150 pgs., available now

Writer: A. David Lewis; Artist: Marvin Perry Mann

reviewed by **Tim Lasiuta** ★★★★

The Lone and Level Sands is a stunning display of literary excellence and an artistic *tour de force* that is the probably the best graphic novel I will ever read.

A. David Lewis reinterprets the story of the Biblical *Exodus* for readers in the context of cultural commonalities. Historical and religious references have been combined to give readers a human view of a pivotal time in the life of the Hebrew nation.

Rameses and his family are real flesh and blood characters who struggle with Yahweh and their faith in Amon Ra. Moses, once cousin to Rameses II, struggles with his old loyalties. The Egyptian people, no longer in the background, now figure prominently in the story.

Marvin Perry Mann gives readers a lesson in storytelling. His minimalist art style allows the intelligent writing of Lewis to permeate the story. Taking a page from Mike Kaluta, the hieroglyphic canto breaks turn this into a textbook example of excellence.

The Lone and Level Sands has now joined the ranks of classical Biblical re-imaginings.

www.aspcomics.com
ISBN: 1-932386-12-2

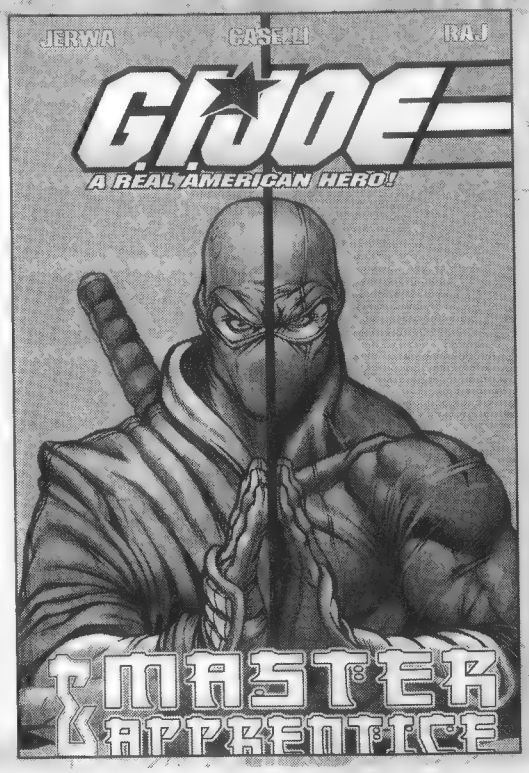
G.I. Joe: Master and Apprentice

Devil's Due Publishing

$12.95, color, 144 pgs., available now

Writer: Brandon Jerwa; Artists: Stephano Caselli, Sunder Raj

reviewed by **Kurt Anthony Krug** ★★★



Brandon Jerwa is one of those creators who write with a sense of history, staying true to what's come before, building on the work of predecessors (in this case, Larry Hama and Josh Blaylock).

It shows in *G.I. Joe: Master and Apprentice*, where he seamlessly fills in the gaps between the Marvel and Devil's Due series, which follows Snake-Eyes reluctantly taking on a new apprentice, Kamakura, after his last one died at the hands of Firefly. Duke recruits Snake-Eyes and Joe ninjas to go after Firefly and the mysterious Nowhere Man. Jerwa also reveals why Snake-Eyes left Scarlett at the altar.

Jerwa tells a fast-paced story, filled with twists and turns, not to mention that he provides excellent character development. This has the feel of an episode of *Alias*. The collection also features a history of the Arashikage ninja clan, character bios, and a preview of *Master and Apprentice II*.

www.devilsdue.com

ISBN: 1-93279-601-0

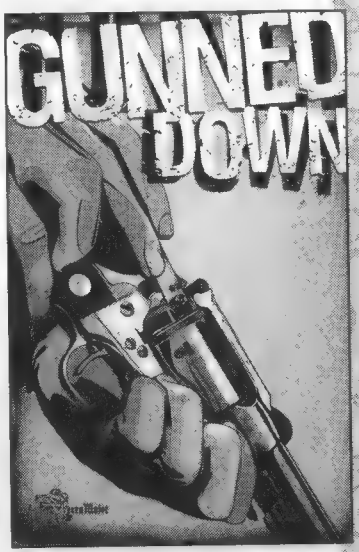
Gunned Down

Terra Major

$10, b/w, 180 pgs., available now

Writers and artists: Various

reviewed by **Tim Lasiuta** ★★½



The premise is simple: Give Brazilian artists the simple assignment of writing and/or illustrating a Western story. Topic: Your choice. Setting: Western. Characters: Up to you.

Given a broad assignment, the results would be, at best, a wide range of quality and topic. That's what *Gunned Down* is: well-written, well-drawn tales combined with a couple of so-so entries and at least one turkey.

Of the 10 tales, "He Died in Bed" by Peov is top-notch, the death of Doc Holliday, told in two pages. The poetic "Ntsayka Ilanum" by Kako is haunting. "The New Freedom" by Nisen and Costa brings Houdini (Erich Weiss) into the American West. "Indian Face" takes a Native American full circle back to his roots and then away, where he can forget them. The worst tale, "Stagecoach Mary," is muddy and convoluted.

Editor Shane Amaya is to be congratulated for bringing a voice to a genre many Americans have washed out, written by those who can see it from a different perspective. Give it a chance.

www.terramajor.com

ISBN: 0-9704149-2-7

Doom Patrol: Down Paradise Way

DC/Vertigo

$19.99, color, 192 pgs., available now

Writer: Grant Morrison

Artists: Various

reviewed by **Jack Abramowitz** ★★★

This third collection of Grant Morrison's *Doom Patrol* stories continues the high weirdness. At this point, readers might be expecting weirdness for the sake of weirdness, but it's actually a readable and cohesive story.

The main focus is the Doom Patrol's involvement in the war between The Orthodoxy of the Insect Mesh and The Ultraquist Geomancers on the plains of the Kaleidoscape. More compelling, however, are the introductions of Mr. Jones ("the most normal man in the world"), former super-hero Flex Mentallo, and Danny, a sentient transvestite street. (He's full of gun shops and hardware stores, but he keeps dressing them up in lacy curtains.)

If there's a shortcoming, it's that the volume ends too abruptly. Readers see the resolution of the Orthodoxy-Geomancer war, but the story of Danny, Flex, and Jones does not conclude in this collection.

Kelley Jones' name appears prominently, but he only pencilled one of the seven issues reprinted here; Richard Case drew the other six. Truth be told, Case's style works better. Jones' art is softer, and his Robotman is too organic-looking.

www.dccomics.com

ISBN 1-4012-0726-X

Essential X-Factor Vol. 1

Marvel

$16.99, b/w, 578 pgs., available now
Writers and artists: Various
reviewed by **Brett Weiss** ★★½

In its first incarnation, *X-Factor* essentially reformed the original X-Men team from the 1960s: Cyclops, Jean Grey, The Beast, Angel, and Iceman. During their early adventures, X-Factor posed as mutant hunters for hire, allegedly helping rid the world of the mutant problem. In reality, their mission was to find troubled mutants and train them to use their powers safely and responsibly, as they themselves had been trained.

This volume reprints the team's lead-in story from *Avengers* #262 and *Fantastic Four* #286, along with *X-Factor* #1-16 and *Annual* #1, *Thor* #373-374, and *Power Pack* #27. There's plenty here to enjoy, from the resurrection of Jean Grey to the personal anguish of Scott Summers (He abandons his wife and child to rejoin the team.) to the introduction of Apocalypse. This is good, nuts-and-bolts super-hero entertainment with the unmistakable feel of canonical *X-Men*.

However, the original issues (complete with color and fan letters) are easy to find in their original forms at a low price, so the purchase of this bulky black and white volume is hardly essential.

www.marvel.com
ISBN: 0-78511-886-1

Brownsville

NBM

$18.95, b/w, 208 pgs., available now
Writer: Neil Kleid
Artist: Jake Allen
reviewed by **Ray Sidman** ★★★½

NBM's Comics Lit line delivers with this biographical story about Jewish mobsters in New York City during the first half of the 20th century.

Brownsville's pivot — and one of many lead characters — is Albert Tannenbaum, whom history remembers as the hitman called "Tick-Tock," part of the infamous Murder Inc. and National Crime Syndicate during the tumultuous 1930s. Readers delve into his mind and conscience, as events unfold between 1925 and 1954. Those who know the story of Tannenbaum and his associates will still enjoy the events laid out in this book. For those who don't know the story, I won't say any more for fear of spoiling the reading experience.

As a history buff, I looked forward to this book written by Xeric Award winner Neil Kleid, and, once I had it in hand, it lived up to my lofty expectations. Jake Allen's art solidly portrays the characters and their situations, even when their thoughts aren't so apparent.

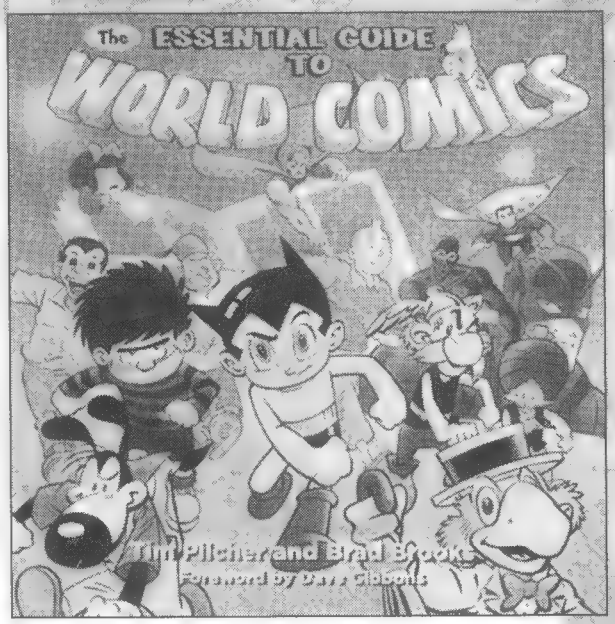
Moreover, the comic book is published in a hardcover format with dust jacket. For $18.95, *Brownsville* is an offer you can't refuse.

www.nbmpub.com
ISBN : 1-56163-458-1

The Essential Guide to World Comics

Collins & Brown

$19.95, color, 320 pgs., available now
Writers: Tim Pilcher and Brad Brooks
reviewed by **Jack Abramowitz** ★★★½



The operative word, the introduction points out, is "Guide." It's not an encyclopedia. It's not supposed to be exhaustive. It's all about breadth, not depth.

That's not to say that it doesn't contain lots of new information; it does. Readers may know Marvel and DC history, but how about Fantagraphics history? What was going on in the U.K., when the U.S. Senate was investigating comic books? What murders in Japan can be linked to manga? If you don't know, that's why you need this book!

The "big three" comics-producing countries are far from the only ones represented. Hong Kong, Korea, and even Cambodia are here. So is Europe, and it's not just *Tintin* and *Asterix*. Australia? Check. Serbia? You bet. India? Nigeria? Lebanon? Yes, and it's fabulous stuff.

Each of the 10 chapters is followed by a spotlight on a prominent creator from the region just discussed. You probably know Jack Kirby (U.S.), Osamu Tezuka (Japan), and Hergé (Belgium). You might not know Argentina's Alberto Breccia or India's Anant Pai.

And *that's* why you need this book.

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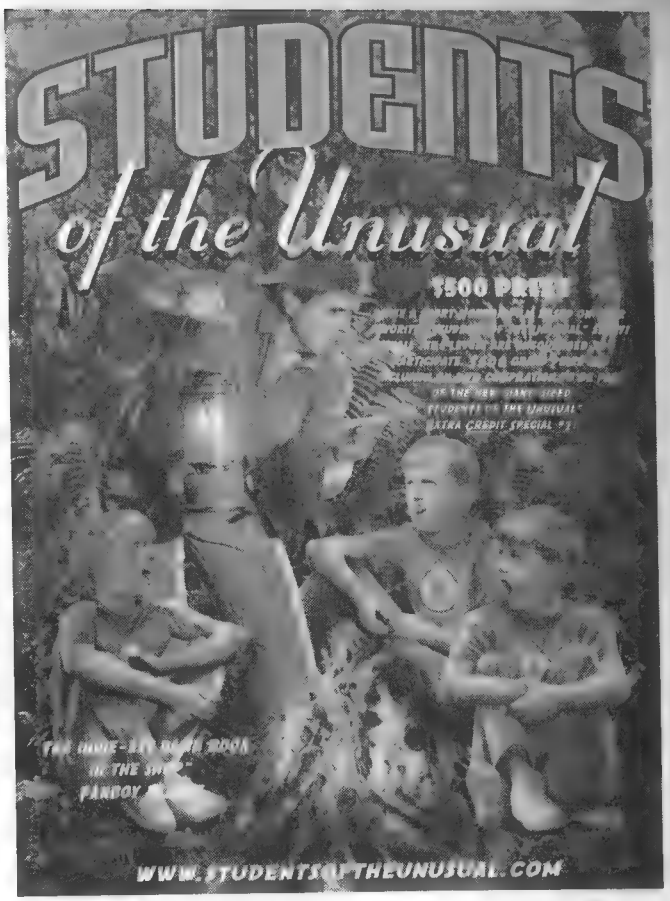
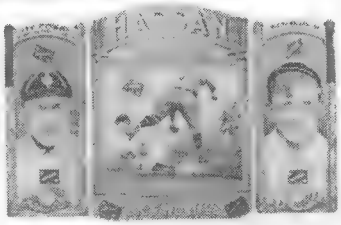
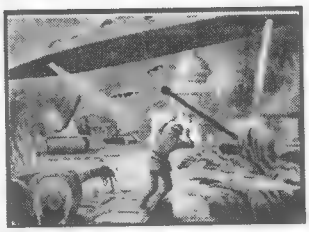


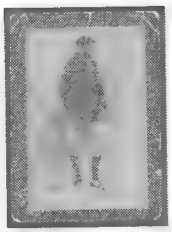
A few of the many highlights of Robert Edward's April 29, 2006 sale event:



1912 T202 Hassan Triple Folder Advertising Display (Reserve $50,000)



1962 Topps "Mars Attacks" Original Artwork #5 "Washington In Flames"



1914 Babe Ruth Rookie card (Reserve $10,000)

"The Ambler Collection" of Original Golden Age Comic Books (390)

Jose Gonzales Vampirella Pinup Art

In addition to over 1,000 lots of Baseball cards and memorabilia, Robert Edward Auctions is presenting a tremendous selection of very high quality Comic, Pop Culture, and Americana related items in its April 29 sale. Bidding starts April 10 by FAX, phone, or the Internet via Robert Edward's state-of-the-art real-time interactive bidding site: www.RobertEdwardAuctions.com. Among the items of special interest will be: "The Ambler Collection" of Original Golden Age Comic Books, comprised of 390 books saved and consigned by their original owner, including The Human Torch #2-1 (CGC VG+ 4.5), to be offered intact as a collection; a selection of rare original Warren artwork including cover paintings to *Vampirella* and *Creepy* by Sanjulian; an extraordinary selection of nonsport original card artwork from many trading card sets such as 1966 Topps Batman and 1962 Topps Civil War News, and including three never-before-offered original 1962 Topps Mars Attacks artworks (est. $10,000/$15,000, reserve $5,000 each); the highest-graded 1940 Superman Gum Inc. complete set (est. $5,000/$7,500+, reserve $2,500); Luis Royo original cover painting for *Heavy Metal* magazine (November 1992), one of Royo's most famous works (reserve $3,000); a circa 1970 Frank Frazetta original watercolor artwork (est. $1,000/$2,000, reserve $500); many original pop art lithographs by artists such as Robert Rauschenberg, James Rosenquist, David Hockney, Frank Stella, Jasper Johns, Keith Haring, and Andy Warhol, highlighted by a 1969 Andy Warhol Campbell's Soup Tomato Beef Noodles Signed Artist's Proof Silkscreen Print (est. $4,000/$6,000, reserve $2,000); and one of the most comprehensive and extraordinary selections of baseball cards and memorabilia of all types to ever come to auction.

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Megillat Esther

Jewish Publication Society

$18, b/w, 172 pgs., available now
Writer and artist: J.T. Waldman
reviewed by **Tim Lasiuta** ★★★½

One of the books of the *Old Testament*, *Esther*, finds new life in this outstanding, accurate interpretation by J.T. Waldman.

When the king banishes his queen, he casts his net wide for a suitable queen. Women from the kingdom are prepared for one year before their presentation. Only Esther meets with his approval, and she, as a secret Jew, can save her people from the evil intentions of the minister Haman. As her people pray for her wisdom, she reveals Haman and lifts her people up once more.

This book is inspiring. If you think the power of one is little, read the life of Esther. If you think Biblical texts are boring, appreciate the talent of Waldman in his imaginative layouts and the dual English-Hebrew lettering. Need an intermission? Hey, the Lightning Vision Round is awesome! And the Chosen King of Yisrael battleground is a joy to behold!

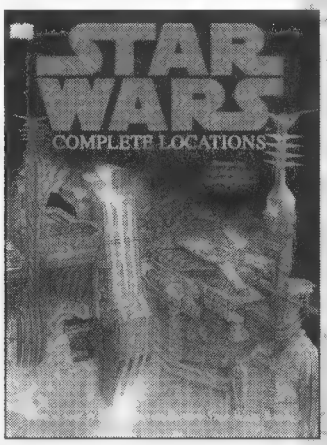
This book lives. Give *Esther* a chance.

www.jewishpub.org
www.megillatesther.com
ISBN: 0-8276-0788-1

Star Wars: Complete Locations

DK

$39.99, color, 176 pgs., available now
Writers: Simon Beecroft, et al
Artists: Hans Jenssen, Richard Chasemore
reviewed by **Oliver Chin** ★★★



Just as their predecessors did, *Star Wars Episodes I* through *III* advanced cinematic special effects. Unfortunately, the narrative itself failed to keep pace, even devolving to the degree at which critics lambasted George Lucas' prioritizing of digital action over the live actors (see Jar Jar Binks). Nevertheless, this collection reminds everyone that there were minds behind the machines. It reveals the enormous detail attention that creative artists provided in order to fashion worlds, architecture, and weapons that garnered the fraction of screen time they deserved.

From the environs of Naboo and the floor of the Galactic Senate, readers can pore over dozens of meticulously drawn set designs, accompanied by movie stills. Dramatic double-page spreads and overhead maps allow true believers to trace the progressions of the show-stopping battles that were the highlights of the recent films.

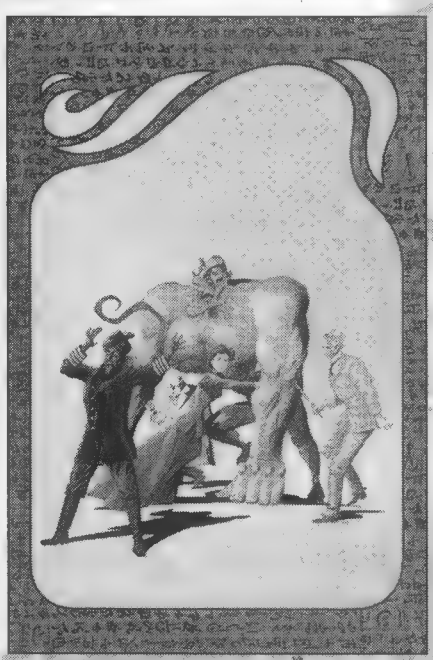
Squeezing the last drop out of the franchise, this lavishly illustrated guide eases the pain of true believers who wish to immerse themselves in this fantasyland. However, two-thirds of the book is dedicated to the most recent three movies, ironically proving the critics' point.

www.dk.com
ISBN: 0-75661-419-8

The League of Extraordinary Gentlemen Vol. II — The Absolute Edition

DC/ABC

$75, color, 448 pgs., available now
Writer: Alan Moore; Artist: Kevin O'Neill
reviewed by **Jack Abramowitz** ★★★½



This collection has no business being as good as it is. First, it's a sequel. Sequels are supposed to be inherently inferior. The format has to be a means of getting collectors to keep buying the same story. *League of Extraordinary Gentlemen* Vol. 2 came out around the same time as the movie; this must be shameless merchandising!

But it is as good as it is.

Vol. 1 was extraordinary (pun unintended), and, despite lacking the in-your-face impact of novelty, Vol. 2 is still a blowaway. From the opening sequence, featuring John Carter and Gullivar Jones, to Tiger Tim and company as Dr. Moreau's New Men, Moore continues to weave a tapestry of disparate literary worlds.

The first volume also includes the prose backup, collected. Don't miss the many worlds, from Narnia to Flatland, that poke in their heads via this "almanac."

The second volume contains the collected scripts, useful for following the jam-packed story. The larger page size also helps attentive readers to absorb it all. And the story has earned the hardcover, slipcased edition.

It's just that good.

www.dccomics.com
ISBN: 1-40120-611-5

New Thunderbolts Vol. 2: Modern Marvel

Marvel

$14.99, color, 144 pgs., available now

Writer: Fabian Nicieza; Artists: Tom Grummett, Bill Sienkiewicz

reviewed by **S.A. Bennett** ★★★

In this volume of *New Thunderbolts:* Speed Demon decides being a superhero or a super villain doesn't have to be an either/or proposition; Photon (formerly Captain Marvel) doesn't fight Photon (likewise) over their mutual moniker; and Radioactive Man goes to Atlantis to bring "justice" to the terrorists who attacked China.

You really have to admire Fabian Nicieza's long memory. Not only does he recall Joystick (while certainly not Spider-Man's worst villain from the '90s, she's right up there with Lady Octopus), but also the obscure Tamara Rahn (a red-skinned aquatic alien who appeared in a handful of '60s *Sub-Mariner* comics). Moreover, he continues to make Radioactive Man, a skirt-wearing anachronism from the Cold War, the most likable character in this overcrowded crowd.

Old-school Marvel fans who have been feeling put off or put out by the new crop of postmodern titles full of decompressed storytelling will find themselves feeling at home here. This pretty, well-crafted mix of angst and action is never anything less than fun.

www.marvel.com

ISBN: 0-78511-794-6

Peace, Love and Lattes: A Rudy Park Collection

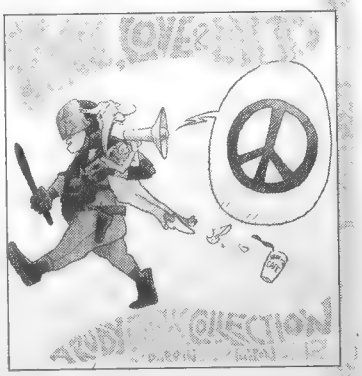
Andrews McMeel

$10.95, b/w, 128 pgs., available now

Writer: Theron Heir

Artist: Darrin Bell

reviewed by **R.C. Harvey** ★★★



The eponymous protagonist of the comic strip *Rudy Park* manages the House of Java cybercafe and lives in an Internet fantasy. This collection of the strip, the second, shows Rudy indulging in his usual preoccupations and the irregular regulars of the coffeehouse indulging in theirs.

The strip escapes this fantasy world occasionally to comment on the passing social and political scenes. Rudy tries out for the reality show *Cannibal*. Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld drops in, accusing everyone of "looking funny at me." And one of Saddam Hussein's body doubles comes in, too, followed by two others, Ahmed and Earl. "Earl?" says Rudy. The strip made its debut in 2001 during a particularly inauspicious week of September, and this collection remembers Sept. 11 in two poignant installments.

Theron Heir, by the way, does not exist. The actual writer of the strip is a highly placed journalist who uses the *nom de plume* Theron Heir, because, he said, he suspects the seriousness of his regular mission in life would be compromised if anyone knew he moonlighted by creating hilarities in the funny papers. This rationale is, of course, in and of itself, satirical. Bell, on the other hand, does exist and produces another strip, *Candorville*, single-handedly.

www.andrewsmcmeel.com

ISBN: 0-74074-662-6

Stargate SG-1: P.O.W.

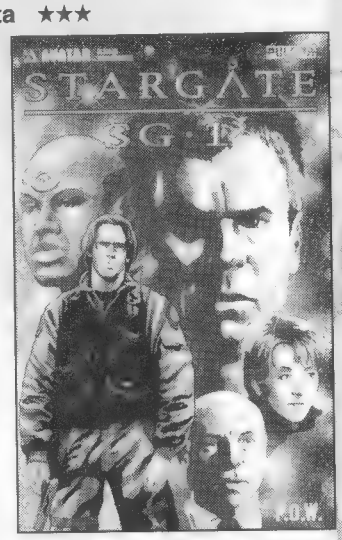
Avatar Press

$13.99, color, 96 pgs., available now

Writer: James Anthony Kouric

Artists: Renado Guedes, Jorge Correa Jr.

reviewed by **Tim Lasiuta** ★★★



You know the writer and artist has done a good job, when a complete story has the *feel* of an episode — when the reader can hear the pthump of weapon blasts and the sarcasm drip from O'Neill's voice. That is the mark of a great comic book. *Stargate SG-1 — P.O.W.* has all of those.

P.O.W. is the first *Stargate SG-1* collection from Avatar Press and as such, is a perfect showcase for the talents of James Anthony Kouric and the art team of Renado Guedes and Jorge Correa. When O'Neill is captured by a Goa'uld who appears to be Skaara, the SGC team has to make a hard decision. To complicate matters, the gate is compromised and the rising temperature threatens explosion. Think Rambo in outer space and you have the idea of *P.O.W.* Powerful loyalties and life debts are called in, and the team will never be the same.

To top this volume off, two other tales, "Know Your Enemy" and "First Prime" are included. All in all, for those not familiar with *Stargate SG-1* from Avatar, this is an essential beginning for an *SG-1* collection.

www.avatarpress.com

ISBN: 1-59291-029-7

***Champions Classic* Vol. 1**

Marvel

$19.99, color, 208 pgs., available in June

Writers and artists: Various

discussed by **Jim Johnson and John Petty**

John Petty: All aboard the *CBG* WABAC machine for a trip in time all the way back to the Swingin' '70s! In those far-flung, halcyon days, men were men, heroes were heroes, and comics were fun! Don't believe me? All you have to do is pick up a copy of this titanic trade paperback to experience the awe and wonder of … The Champions! Made up of X-vets Iceman and Angel, as well as former Avengers Hercules and The Black Widow, and rounded out by everyone's favorite Satanic cyclist, Johnny Blaze, The Ghost Rider, this unlikely team traveled the country, helping the common man and facing down such boisterous baddies as Pluto, Rampage, The Griffin, The Titanium Man, and The Crimson Dynamo. The very thought makes me want to put on my leisure suit and hustle on down to the local disco. Whaddaya you say, O Adversarial Arch-Enemy?

Jim Johnson: For God's sake, man, listen to yourself. Did you get hit in the head with a racquetball one too many times? You're extolling the virtues of a title that was one of Marvel's all-time lamest team books. During this title's run, writers like Steve Englehart, Gerry Conway, and Jim Shooter were creating a stellar run on *The Avengers*, Roy Thomas was doing the same on *Fantastic Four*, and Chris Claremont had begun his legendary stay on *X-Men*. And you're pining for this nearly forgotten, second-rate knock-off? Sacrilege, I say. There was a reason this book only lasted 17 issues, my friend. The talent was top-notch, but the results far from that. When I think of leisure suits and discos, I sure don't think of (gag) The Champions. WABAC *that*, you Easily Enamored Emissary of, uh, Eccentricity.

Petty: Hey, let's watch the racquetball jokes, mister, or I'll have to break both your arms. You're right that there was great work being done at the same time as The Champs — not only the titles you mentioned, but also Jim Starlin's "Thanos Saga" and Frank Brunner's tenure on *Doctor Strange* immediately come to mind. But none of that detracts from the freewheeling spirit of fun that pervaded "The Most Sensational New Super-Group" (as the cover of the first issue proudly stated) of the 1970s. Nearly forgotten? Sadly, yes. Second rate? I say thee *nay!* And as for the series only lasting 17 issues (#1-11 are reprinted here), *The Incredible Hulk* lasted a mere six issues in his initial run, despite the efforts of such super-star creators as Jack Kirby and Steve Ditko. Whadday say to that, you Nostalgia-Deprived Nabob of Nonsense?

Johnson: I say you're comparing apples and baseballs, O Rambling Reviewer of the Rotten, Retread, and Rejected. The Hulk was given a second shot, and he's still around, 40 years later. Apparently, no one thought that The Champions had that kind of potential, because they're still waiting for their second try. Even then up-and-coming super-star artist John Byrne couldn't save this book from its own death throes. Speaking of which, this compilation would have been a bit more attractive had it included more than just Byrne's introductory issue of the series. It's kind of as if the best DVD of the boxed set is missing, you know?

Petty: You're right on one count, O Short-Sighted Sage. It's a shame that Marvel didn't reprint the *entire* 17-issue run (as well as their appearance in *Iron Man Annual* #4). Those later issues, particularly the introduction of the villainous Swarm (the man whose entire body was composed of living killer bees) were a hoot! But fine comics, like fine wine, are beyond the palates of most mere mortals, so back to your beer-swilling and your pork rinds, Jimbo. I'll take the heady bouquet of *The Champions* any day.

www.marvel.com

ISBN: 0-7851-2097-1

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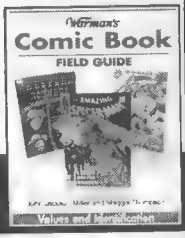

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Girl power!

FEMALE MANGA ICONS

by **BILL AGUIAR**

The role of women in manga is a tough one to decipher, especially in action stories. Part of the challenge comes from the fragmented nature of Japanese history, with the country being trapped in the equivalent of medieval times until the 1870s, becoming a fascist state in the 1930s, and then a modern democracy.

Laws change faster than attitudes, so there is a distinct lack of strong female characters in most action titles. Women tend to be cast in supporting roles or, if they *are* allowed to have their own abilities, once they meet the male protagonist, their ability to fend for themselves disappears.

In the historical action series *Samurai Deeper Kyo*, Yuya is introduced in the early episodes as an accomplished, pistol-toting bounty hunter and, since handguns were rare in historical Japan, she had an effective method of persuasion, even though she was not a sword expert. But after she meets Kyo and joins him, she never poses a meaningful threat to any other characters or even minor antagonists. She spends the rest of the series supplying exposition and cooking.

These traditional views of women still have considerable sway in Japan, to such an extent that there was surprise when a successful career woman married into the Japanese Imperial Family. Among women commentators, there was questioning as to why she would give up all of her accomplishments, for, once she was taken into the Imperial Household, it was assumed she would be subsumed and disappear into that tradition-bound institution. (Unfortunately, to a large extent, they have been right.)

Currently, there is a movement in Japanese literature in which women are violent and dark, as a way to compensate for the society in which they feel they are trapped. One can make the argument that only recently has manga begun to reflect that, because, while manga started as the voice of the marginalized, by the time these gender issues started coming to the fore in the '80s and '90s, manga had already been incorporated into the mainstream.

Female power is seen more in the shoujo titles, where what both female characters and readers' desires are more able to meet. In some ways, whether there are strong female roles in action-adventure titles is irrelevant, because, for the most part, women are not reading them. The market in Japan, where these titles

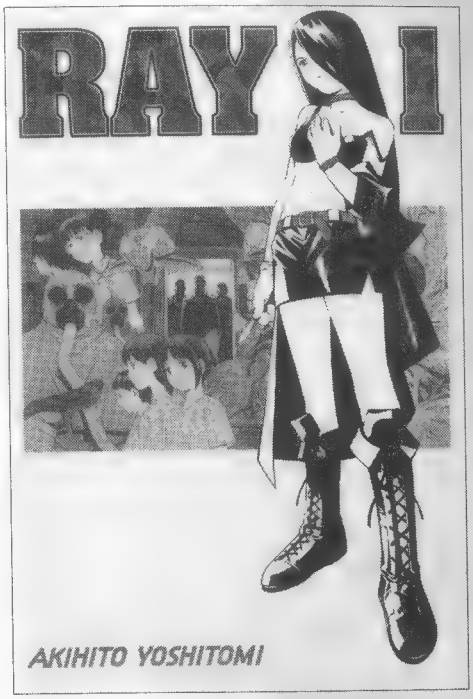
are created, is large enough to have clear separation among target audiences. This is unlike U.S. direct-market readership, which is overwhelmingly male even today, except for a few titles, including *Sandman* and *Y: The Last Man*. The U.S. comic-book market is, for all intents and purposes, a single demographic with a single, targeted means of reaching it.

This is a problem for all action comics, both American and manga, because U.S. comics have long had trouble supporting a female lead title. At times, *X-Men* has had more female than male characters, but the title was still *X-Men*, and, outside Jean Grey and endless permutations of "The Dark Phoenix Saga," none of the other female characters have been in the lead in the X-titles, even when a female is the nominal team leader at times. Marvel gets around the problem by mostly featuring female characters in limited series, rather than ongoing titles. For a while, the most successful female characters were spin-offs of male counterparts, such as She-Hulk and Spider-Woman. The exception that proves the rule is Wonder Woman, an iconic character that at various times DC has had trouble fitting into its lineup, despite her creation as a female role model. It has only been post-*Crisis* that she has had a relatively consistent portrayal.

But back to the role of women in action-adventure manga: In the last 10 years, women have been taking stronger roles, though not necessarily in obvious ways. It may be a while before women in action roles are interchangeable with men, but there is movement toward that direction. Let's talk about two titles where you can find them.

Ray (ADV Manga, $9.99 per volume) is a medical action-adventure story, though the medicine in it is enough to make anyone with knowledge of the subject shudder. Ray is a young woman raised in isolation, along with other children, from the rest of the world. They were to be used as biological spare parts, and Ray herself lost her eyes to a high bidder for $2 million. But, after she lost her eyes, someone rescued her and gave her new eyes endowed with X-ray vision. She has no idea who rescued her or gave her new eyes but she is determined to discover the organization that held her, recover her eyes, and find out who rescued her.

Along the way she becomes an underground doctor, righting wrongs and performing frankly impossible surgeries along the way with the aid of her new eyes. Here is the part that will drive readers who know something about medicine crazy: There is no problem that cannot be solved in the universe of *Ray* with the judicious application of a power scalpel, which also makes a good throwing knife. The way the manga is written, it is conceivable she could cure someone of cancer by stabbing each cancerous cell individually with the scalpel. The clinic where she works is also filled with kung-fu nurses and a head doctor who looks like a pirate, complete with wooden leg, who has something to do with her rescue but instead insists on playing Yoda, leading her to the answers she seeks with roundabout cryptic utterances.



The series unfolds in an episodic fashion, some episodes having only a tangential relationship to the central mystery of *Ray*, while others move the story along. To an extent, the conspiracy opposing her is toying with her, letting Ray learn about them in dribs and drabs before diverting her with a medical emergency, but the reader never feels that Ray is helpless or making no progress.

Though the title is in no way realistic, it *is* fun in an over-the-top fashion. While the story has male characters, so far none of them has overshadowed Ray, and she is the leading force in the series. On the downside, she tends to be reactive rather than proactive, but that is part of the problem with a medical story: You can only cure what is sick. Some of her allies seem to be holding information back from her, and she could be more aggressive in pursuing that information, but she never lets them completely off the hook. It is the equivalent of a big-screen action movie with enough bang and suspense to keep the viewer from noticing the holes in the plot.

As an aside, there is non-sexual nudity in the book — basically topless women — which could be a problem for some retailers and readers. Take it as you will.

While the story has male characters, so far none of them has overshadowed Ray, and she is the leading force in the series.

Gunslinger Girls (ADV Manga, $9.99 per volume) is a more nuanced series, revolving around the Italian government recruiting badly injured little girls and then rebuilding them into assassin cyborgs. The process erases many of their memories, and they are teamed with a handler (an older brother, so to speak) who keeps them in line and directs their violence at the proper targets. As a result of surgery, memory wipes, and the pairing, all the girls to a certain extent are loyal to, perhaps even in love with, their handlers. But the girls have different relationships with their handlers, as do the handlers with the girls. Henrietta is the closest to being a lead character in the title, but all of the half dozen or so cyborgs have

Once you get past the fact that these girls are killer cyborgs, the story is more realistic and layered than *Ray*.

storylines or episodes devoted to them. Henrietta almost died in a mobster attack on her family, and there are hints that the attackers will end up involved in the series.

Each of the relationships has a different flavor, from a handler who treats his girl as merely a piece of machinery, to another who is distant because a medical repair wiped her memory of him and their previous bond, so he is reluctant to involve himself again. The girls are also varied, from one who is still obeying the last order of her handler to learn, to one that is purposely cynical and distant from her handler, while another is just happy to be mobile.

The agency that employs the cyborgs is Italian, and the main enemy seems to be a terrorist group that is trying to achieve independence for several old kingdoms in northern Italy. The agency is not filled with angels, seeing as how they order murders as political favors and cold-bloodedly use and abuse prepubescent girls to do their dirty work. In addition to the violation of being enhanced and being used as killers, the fact is the girls are also controlled, mind-wiped to a certain degree, subjected to a drug regimen that shortens their useful lifespan, and it is uncertain what will happen to them once they are no longer "useful." What drives the series is the mercy of the characters, because, while their intentions remain good, their actions are something else. That mercy is shown in how the teams of girls and handlers relate to the terrible situations that are presented to them.

As for the action, these cyborgs all handle modern weapons with ease, using sniper rifles and assault rifles with enhanced strength that comes from their artificial limbs; the only sure way to kill them is a shot through the eye, destroying the brain. Thus, they get to blow things up with only minor damage done to them, and the fact that they are little girls means that they can get very close to their targets before those targets realize that the danger they face is the girls themselves.

While some opponents of the terrorists are the usual faceless minions who exist to be mowed down, there are a small number of leaders and specialists who have so far managed to survive encounters with the girls (and in one case bested them). They also have the best of intentions, though obviously, again, their actions do not reflect that.

Once you get past the fact that these girls are killer cyborgs, the story is more realistic and layered than *Ray*, with many more shades of gray, which even the girl assassins are aware of. By their very nature, they are not instigators of violence and are not the prime movers of the "A" plot. On the other hand, they take a lead in the story elsewhere, because so much of the title is about how the characters relate to new situations. Those can be either the girls themselves, as they relate to their new selves and each other, or their handlers, as they try to get a grasp on the girls and what they are thinking and are capable of. This is more of a Tom Clancy-type political action-thriller than the summer blockbuster that *Ray* was.

Women in manga tend to show their strength as creators. For example, the studio group Clamp comprises four female creators who first started working together on *dojinshi* and have since moved on to publishing multiple manga titles. Some of those titles are relationship-based and others action-oriented, with the titles aimed across the age spectrum.

With four creators as part of the collective, the tone of each manga title, the genre, and even the art style is dependent on which member of Clamp is the lead for the project.

Clamp is just one of the strong studios that operate in manga: not quite a publisher, but bringing more strength to bear than just a single creator working as a lone gun. Next time, look for a discussion of studios in manga and some of their titles that have been brought to the United States.

1 World

Viz

$3.99, b/w, 40 pgs., available now
Writer: Annette Roman
Artist: Leandro Ng
reviewed by **S.A. Bennett** ★★

Teenager Rei, a homeless street kid with dreams of being the world's greatest martial artist, rescues an abused puppy from its tormentors.

In fairytale fashion, the "puppy" turns out to be a mystical being that wants to reward Rei but, instead of wishes, agrees to become his trainer. Rather than being schooled in kung fu, Rei is sent on a round the world trip to learn how to help those in need. Here, he deals with poverty in Africa.

This Viz/World Bank co-production is well-intentioned, but, given the importance of the project, it would've been nice if Viz could've recruited a stronger creative team. Still, it's possible the target audience of teens won't mind the simplistic mock-manga art or the awkward way it blends goofy comedy and serious subjects (going from madcap antics to spousal abuse in a little over a page).

Likewise, the small, thin format offering 40 pages (several of which are devoted to "learn more about it" articles in the back) for $3.99 makes for a perfect impulse purchase.

www.viz.com
ISBN: 1-42150-364-6

Anne Freaks Vol. 1

ADV Manga

$9.99, b/w, 184 pgs., available now
Writer and artist: Yua Kotegawa
reviewed by **Bill Aguiar** ★★★

Anne Freaks is the story of a young woman who recruits two murderers to be her accomplices in killing her father. Now, her father is a leader of terrorist extremist group, and the two murderers have good reasons for what they've done — but still.

Anne herself is so focused on her mission that killing distractions to her assistants is inconsequential. Her two assistants, Yuri and Mitsuba, are also interesting, in that Yuri is a long-abused, henpecked man who has little will of his own and does whatever the women in his life tell him to do, while Mitsuba, in contrast, is sure of himself, arrogant, and willing to do anything.

While they sometimes do good deeds, such as protecting schoolchildren who are targeted by terrorists, Anne participates only because, when the terrorists make their move, their center of operations will be lightly defended and she will be able to do brutal interrogations.

Anne Freaks is not a happy, well-adjusted title. At best, it is sociopathic, disconnected from empathy, and just plain brutal. That said, it is still a good story, and I can't wait to see what direction it takes next.

www.advfilms.com
ISBN: 1-4139-0268-5

Tower of the Future

DC/CMX

$9.99, b/w, 192 pgs., available now
Writer and artist: Hiwatari Saki
reviewed by **S.A. Bennett** ★★★

Takeru is a fairly normal Japanese high-school student more interested in fantasy role-playing games and his lack of a love life than school. But his dreams of creating his own manga are derailed, when his mother is hurt in a car accident and, on her deathbed, reveals a family secret: He has a half-French half-sister named Hyoju.

Even though she's the product of a relationship before his parents' marriage, Takeru's first reactions are anger and petulance at his father. But his fantasy life gives him the courage to accept his mother's dying wish: that his half-sister be allowed to live with them in Japan.

So far, though, readers are given no hint as to why Hyoju would want to give up everything she's ever known to live with family she's never met — especially since she's sure to experience culture shock and, being bi-racial, trouble fitting in. Though the premise is pure high-concept soap opera, it's certainly pretty enough, and the family conflicts as presented are realistic enough to make the audience want to read Vol. 2.

www.cmxmanga.com
ISBN: 1-40120-814-2

Is it a bird? Is it a plane? Is it Superman? No —

It's SUPER LOIS!

by **CRAIG SHUTT**

Super-Lois favored this green costume with yellow highlights when she wasn't wearing a Superman knockoff.

Dear Mr. Silver Age,

Superman says he won't marry Lois Lane because his enemies could harm her. (Although it escapes me how that increases the security needs compared to being his "Girl Friend.") Why doesn't he just use his super-brain to create a super-serum that would give her super-powers? I'm sure she would use them wisely.

Susan R.
Baxter Building

Mr. Silver Age says: In other words, Susie, what you're telling me is that you've never actually read a Lois Lane story, is that right? Because back in the Silver Age, citizens of Metropolis became pretty used to looking up in the sky and seeing Lois make like a bird or a plane. Sadly, her history was not uniformly strong for using those powers well or for holding onto them for longer than the story's quickly arriving last panel. Imagine that.

Some of those Super-Lois tales were Imaginary Stories, and I have to admit that it's beginning to look as if some of those adventures may never happen, just as they warned us. But that doesn't prevent us from pulling them out to see how she handled even those Imaginary tries at competing with The Last Son of Krypton in the super-power department — especially since she most distinguished her super-powered self when she was Imaginary.

Keep in mind that, when I say she gained "super-powers," I'm thinking of your basic Kryptonian trinity of flight, invulnerability, and strength, with the occasional super-speed or telescopic vision thrown in just for fun. I'm not including those times when Lois gained X-ray vision, super-aroma (don't ask), mermaid capabilities, a super-brain, elasticity, invisibility, alien cat feet, insect powers, kryptonite

vision (especially since she actually didn't), or any of a host of other oddball powers and abilities far beyond those of mortal women but not exactly impressive enough to make Superman line up groomsmen. Maybe we'll look at those some other time, when I'm in the mood for a good long visit with Professor Potter.

Likewise, Lois' rival Lana Lang found herself capable of lifting cars over her head plenty of times (and that's not even counting that Insect Queen thing she had going for her). On a few occasions, as we'll see, she got super-powers right alongside Lois. Super-Lana was a state of affairs only to be expected, of course, since she had many years' head start annoying Superboy before Lois got in the game. But we'll have to check in more fully with Super-Lana some other time.

To be sure, the super-rivals weren't the only ones among Superman's Silver Age friends to find that boulders were breaking over their noggins. Jimmy Olsen occasionally gained super-powers, or at least he thought he did, or at least someone who was impersonating him did. (Jimbo had a complicated life.) But The Jimster even more often turned into odd creatures, not that he had an exclusive on that predicament, either. Heck, even Perry White gained super-powers! It's obvious that knowing The Big Blue Boy Scout could pay super-dividends, albeit temporary ones.

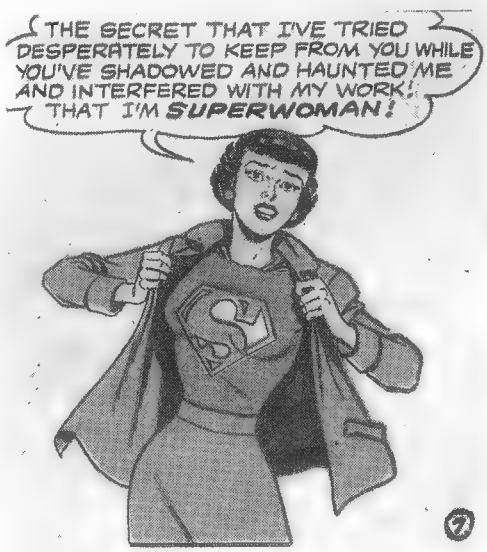
Sadly, as much fun as it would be to jabber about those times Superman's other pals 'n' gals gained super-powers, too, ***CBG***'s editors decided for some reason not to turn this into an all-Mr. Silver Age issue. So we'll be focusing on The Main Maiden herself, Sam and Ella Lane's little girl, and looking at those adventures where she gained what we acknowledge to be bona fide "super-powers." Are you thinking that limits us to a couple of rousing stories, Sue? Then you'd better sit yourself down and prepare to be entranced. Not only did Lois gain super-powers fairly frequently, but, after a while, it became almost like clockwork.

Lois' first brush with Silver Age super-powers came when she had "Lois Lane's Super-Dream" in *Superman* #125 (Nov 58), a hilarious tale of the perfect Lois world that the rest of us would just live in. Hospitalized after falling off a ledge while trying to gain a scoop, Lois's unconscious brain heard that Superman had secured blood of her rare type. Her brain mistook that to mean Superman was giving her a transfusion, which gave her super-powers. (A variation on this scenario was used as the catalyst for Lois's first-ever brush with super-powers during the Golden Age; see the sidebar.)

Lois became Power Girl, wearing a red wig to disguise her identity and creating a yellow costume with green accents, complete with a "P" emblem extending from neck to waist. Soon, when Clark Kent hurt himself, PG gave him a blood transfusion. Of course, Clark then gained super-powers, too — and made possibly the most pathetic super-hero ever turned loose on the world. He wore an immense warning light so planes wouldn't collide with him when he flew; he burrowed into the ground to avoid being hit by a wayward missile; and he screwed up mission after mission. Ultimately, he gave away his secret identity by changing in front of a crowd, just as Lois woke up. She laughed at what a pathetic fool Clark became with super-powers, and he gave us readers one of his traditional she's-such-an-oblivious-fool winks.

Lois dreamed up a redheaded Power Girl for her first Silver Age super-tale in* Superman *#125.

The next time her super-powers showed up, it was for real, if not for good. Lois became "The Superwoman of Metropolis!" in *Superman's Girl Friend Lois Lane* #8 (Apr 59). In response to a wish that Clark overheard, Superman gave Lois a helping of his super-powers as a birthday present and told her she should fill in for him while he was on one of those frequent space missions that kept him conveniently away from Earth to make the



Lois became Superwoman in* Lois Lane *#8 but spent precious little time doing super-things.

plot work right. Happily, Lois donned a Supergirl-like costume (except for red gloves and blue boots) along with a blonde wig.

But she spent little time actually being Superwoman, since Clark didn't really leave Earth. Instead, he hung around and shad-

Lois donned her favorite green Super-Lois suit for the first time when she and Lana gained powers in* Lois Lane *#17.

owed Lois to force her to reveal her identity after she had revealed her presence as Superwoman, to Teach Lois A Lesson. Yes, it was just one more example of The Man of Steel's ongoing campaign of Tough Love for his sweetie, and on her birthday, no less. What a guy. Lois worked her way out of trap after trap, but she finally was forced to reveal her identity during an emergency while with Clark. But by then, she'd lost her powers, and Clark laughed at the notion that she'd been this mysterious Superwoman, irritating her no end. What a guy.

Lois gained super-powers again in *Lois* #17 (May 60), but this time they took second billing to "Lana Lang, Superwoman!" even though both Lois and her good friend and bitter rival gained powers pretty much together. The powers came from Superman, and his setup made it seem as if he gave Lois her powers out of pity after offering them to Lana, but in fact he intended to give them to her all along. He just let Lois stew and moan for a while because that's the way Big Blue showed his love.

Did Super-Lois and Super-Lana help the needy children of the world after gaining powers in* Lois Lane *#21? Not really.

It began when Lana arrived at *The Daily Planet* to write a series about her Smallville adventures with Little Blue. While there, she ran into Superman, who offered, out of nowhere, to give her super-powers. As in Lois' earlier dream, a blood transfusion did the trick, and Lana changed into a spiffy yellow costume with purple highlights. Meanwhile, a shocked Lois kept a stiff upper lip — until a page or so later, when Superman finally offered to give Lois a blood transfusion, too. Her green suit with yellow highlights sported a skirt rather than Lana's briefs, but the two looked darned smashing together.

Unfortunately, they accomplished very little between their super-selves, mostly just showing off their powers until the big payoff came and Superman revealed why he'd given them powers. Once that danger passed, they quickly lost them.

Lois and Lana pulled their super-suits out of the closet later that year to hold "The Battle between Super-Lois and Super-Lana" in *Lois* #21 (Nov 60). While on the same reporting assignment, the gals strayed away for a dip in a supposed "magic" lake in a hidden cavern. They pooh-poohed the superstition, but, needless to say, it gave them the usual super-powers. And, of course, immediately upon receiving super-powers, their first thought was to use their abilities to help the people of the ... well, actually, they began doing what the title said, figuring that, since they were both now suitable to marry The Last Son of Krypton, one of them should.

After a stupefied Kryptonian bizarrely agreed that this competition for his super-hand was only fair, the super-LLs decided that whoever proved to be the better super-mate would walk down the super-aisle. So they used their super-powers to, um, cook their super-beau a pizza (Lana) and pancakes (Lois), dress themselves in historical finery (Supes wasn't too impressed), and carve their faces Mount Rushmore-like onto mountains. When these embarrassing efforts proved pretty much a draw of self-centered idiocy, they started a super-catfight. Supes breathed a super-sigh of relief when their powers faded away.

This use of super-powers by Lois was so pathetic that her exploits were used as evidence against her when she stood trial for Lana's murder in *Lois* #99-100 (Feb-Apr 70). And, let's face it, it makes a pretty strong case when you gain unbelievable super-powers and about all you can think to do with them is pull out the hair of another super-powered woman who's standing in the way of your

marrying your man. Granted, I'm not sure it should be used as evidence in a murder trial, but, since Superman had been sworn in as special prosecutor to offset Batman operating as Lois' defense attorney, this trial had enough goofiness to go around.

Lois dug out her green super-suit one more time, when she got "The Reversed Super-Powers!" in *Action Comics* #274 (Mar 61). The alleged reversal happened when a kryptonite experiment that had hooked up Superman and Lois' brains went bad. Superman lost his powers — and immediately proposed, since he was now normal. Yikes! But Lois balked, fearful that she might not love a non-super Superman. Double, triple, and quadruple yikes! As Superman tried to adjust to being a normal guy, Lois awoke several days later to discover that his super-powers had been transferred to her! So she put on the ol' green costume and went off to do The Man of Steel's job, much to his chagrin.

This bizarre situation turned out to be a hoax by a renegade super-robot (hey, it happens) to prove that Lois loved his master only for his super-powers. This would have been a terrible thing for him to do, except, well, he was mostly right. But Supes agreed that he, likewise, hadn't reacted well to being non-super when Lois turned super, so they agreed to forget it ever happened. Lois thought this idea made her super-boyfriend even more super-wonderful, but it mostly made them both look pretty super-ficial.

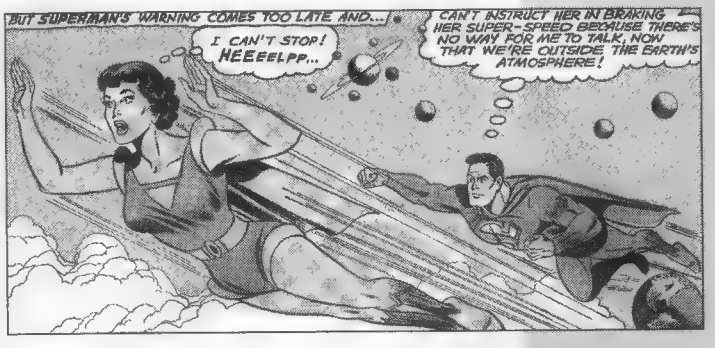
The next time Lois gained super-powers, it wasn't really Lois; it was "The Lois Lane of the Future!" in *Lois* #28 (Oct 61). Her meeting with Superman began when Lex Luthor attacked Supes with one of his typical jailhouse weapons. (Put together from tomato cans, a light bulb, a bedspring, orange juice, and a flashlight — eat your heart out, MacGyver!) It sent Superman into the far future, where, by an amazing coincidence, he was saved by Lois 4XR, the great-great-great-great-great-granddaughter of his very own Lois. What are the chances of that? Actually, they were pretty good in the Silver Age. This Lois had super-powers, but, then, *everyone* in her time had super-powers due to a cosmic accident.

But Superman suspected that Lois 4XR would've had super-powers, anyway, because he figured he'd married her ancestor. So he set out to prove it and he thought he did prove it. When he returned to his own time, though, he learned that he'd been wrong, leaving his suspicions unconfirmed. What he did prove was that his working with a super-Lois did not create the level of super-team-work that you might expect (that is, if you'd never read a Lois comic).

Exactly one year later, Lois gained Imaginary powers, but she got them only in passing so we could see "Lana Lang's Romance with Superman III!" an Imaginary Story in *Lois* #36 (Oct 62). It began with Superman inventing a serum that gave Lois super-powers, which led in panel two to their being married and in panel three to having two children. These eight-page Imaginary Stories certainly didn't dawdle. Mostly, that just set up the situation in which Aunt Lana felt miserable when she visited the super-family.

Lois handled her powers extremely well in this case, wearing a super-suit much like Supergirl's except for the addition of some fashionable yellow gloves. But, again, that mostly happened so we could see Lana feeling

Out came the green super-suit for the third time when Supes' powers were transferred to her in* Action *#274.



Not even Super-Lois of the future, who had experience, could handle her powers well, as seen in* Lois Lane *#28.

Imaginary super-Lois handled her powers well, much to Lana's chagrin in* Lois Lane *#36.

Supermaid was one of the all-time great Super-Loises, so, of course, she was Imaginary, as seen in* Superman *#159.

ever more depressed each time the happy couple saved the world. She felt *so* lousy that she volunteered for an experiment that accidentally flung her into the far future.

There, she met the aforementioned Superman III (so it wasn't *that* far into the future) and entered into said romance with her former best friend's grandson. Let's not think about it. Amazingly enough for an Imaginary Story, everyone lived happily ever after, although I understand that there's an outside chance that this story might not ever happen. My doubts rest especially on the fact that super-Lois' few panels showed her to be super-capable.

Capable Super-Lois returned in another Imaginary Story (of course) in *Superman* #159 (Feb 63). This novel-length adventure featured such a classic reversal that it's surprising it took them so long to present it. Page one of "Lois Lane: The Super-Maid of Krypton!" told the story: Great scientist and humble farmer Sam Lane discovered the planet Earth was about to explode, so he rocketed his infant daughter to the planet Krypton, where she was adopted by a kindly couple. Before shooting his daughter into space, Pa Lane also took the time to use a raybeam to give his offspring a whole mess of super-powers, avoiding the need for any semblance of even DC-style "science" to try to explain them.

Krypton Girl, a computer simulation, was not the most easygoing of the Super-Loises, as shown in* Lois Lane *#47.

As a result, Kandi Kan grew up to become Supermaid, wearing a smashing bright pink outfit emblazoned with an emblem of the planet Earth. Supermaid-Kandi spent quite a bit of time being bedeviled by that pest, Kal-El, especially after they both went to work at a Kryptonopolis hospital (as nurse and doctor, respectively).

Needless to say, Imaginary ironies abounded until a most unsatisfactory ending (although I'm sure I was satisfied as a dumb little 8-year-old) in which purple Earthite transferred Supermaid's powers to Kal. Then, the usual scenarios of smug Superman blowing off a dismayed

Super-Lois reruns

Want to read about old-school Super-Lois but can't find these classic issues? Here are the places they've been reprinted, according to Mark Waid's reprint index and other sources:

Superman #125 was reprinted in *Superman: The Man of Tomorrow Archives* #1 and *Lois Lane Annual* #1.

Lois Lane #8 was reprinted in *Lois Lane* #95 and #131.

Lois Lane #17 and #21 were reprinted in *80-Page Giant* #3.

Action #274 was reprinted in *Lois Lane* #104.

Lois Lane #36 was reprinted in *Lois Lane* #86.

Lois Lane #51 was reprinted in *Superman Family* #164 and *DC's Greatest Imaginary Stories* collection. *Superman* #159 hasn't been reprinted, but Supermaid was shown on the frontispiece of that volume and was mentioned in Mr. Silver Age's epic introduction.

Lois Lane #15 was reprinted in *Superman* #207.

Adventure #288 was reprinted in the *Tales of Bizarro World* collection and *Superman* #202.

Superman #45 was reprinted in *Superman: From the '30s to the '70s* and *From the '30s to'80s*.

Action #60 was reprinted in *Action Archives* #4 and Les Daniels' *Comix* book.

Kandi began to play out on Krypton instead of Earth. But, until those last four panels, Supermaid was a Super-Lois to be proud of, albeit an Imaginary one.

Exactly one year after that Imaginary Kandi adventure, semi-Imaginary super-powers were bestowed on Superman's Girl Friend in *Lois* #47 (Feb 64) when a computer simulation in the Fortress of Solitude allowed her to experience "The Super-Life of Lois Lane!" The Man of Steel explained that the computer would solve any problem she put to it, so, of course, she asked it what would have happened if she, rather than Kal-El, had been born on Krypton.

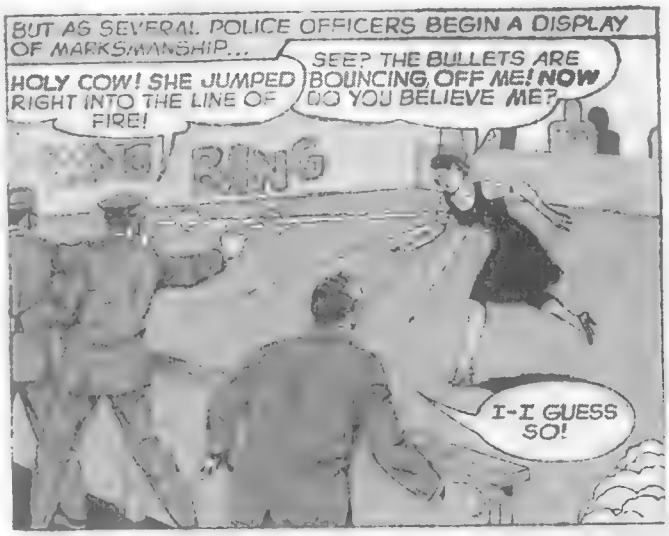
What would have happened was Krypton Girl, sporting a spiffy black costume and green cape, a mask, and a black pony-tailed wig over her black shorter hair (say what?). The rest of the tale pretty much focused on how Clark Kent obsessively tried to trick Lois into revealing she was Krypton Girl. His tricks became more and more disturbing, until he finally made her reveal the truth — and she beamed him into the Phantom Zone forever. Yow!

Lois turned off the machine, deciding that Clark had well deserved his banishment from Earth. Then, she had one of those rare moments of self-awareness, in which she realized that, if Superman really were as petty as she'd turned out to be in the simulation, she'd have spent the last decade having phantom tea with Mon-El. She dampened down her Clark suspicions for a while after that — but we all know that didn't last.

Imaginary powers once more were bestowed on Lois when she became Wife #1 in the triumvirate making up "The Three Wives of Superman!" in the three-part Imaginary Story in *Lois* #51 (Aug 64). Lois finally convinced Big Blue that she didn't care, if crooks took pot-shots at Mrs. Superman, so the big lug agreed to marry her. When crooks actually *did* take pot-shots at her, Supes devised a serum that gave her super-powers.

Lois made a pretty dandy little super-helpmate in her purple and green costume. Sadly, the serum turned out to include an ingredient that killed her. Oops. The other two wives (Lana and Lori Lemaris, of course) didn't end up any happier — or any more alive. This was one of the all-time downer Imaginary Stories, which we'll have to hope is the one that will never happen.

Exactly one year later, our girl reporter received only one of the super-trinity of powers, invulnerability, when she committed "Lois Lane's Super-Perfect Crime!" in *Lois* #59 (Aug 65). The quick set-up



The good news in* Lois Lane *#51 was that she became Mrs. Superman! The bad news was she shouldn't start cooking any three-minute eggs.

Lois gained invulnerability, turned evil when she didn't drink her milk, and killed Superman in* Lois Lane *#59. Let that be a lesson, kids!

A scheming Kandorian gave Lois super-powers in* Lois Lane *#85, leading our happy couple to start making wedding plans.

had sympathetic aliens landing near her to give her an invulnerability serum so she could marry her super-beau. The only side effect was that she would turn evil, if she didn't drink a glass of milk every day, and how hard is *that* to do? Needless to say, it's pretty hard, if you're Lois Lane and you're in the Silver Age.

Once she turned evil, she pulled off her alleged perfect crime by dressing as Lana to kill Superman, which caused said redhead to be convicted of murder. OK, Lois was invulnerable, not super-smart. Her next glass of moo juice reverted her to her old self, causing her terrible agony over her misdeeds, even after she confessed. But it turned out to be a dream, so it doesn't even count as Imaginary invulnerability, and we're moving on.

The swan song for Silver Age Super-Lois came in a two-part extravaganza that happened a full (and exact) three years after her super-crime. "When Lois was More Super than Superman!" began in *Lois* #87 (Aug 68) and continued after a Giant issue with the "Feud of the Super-Femmes!" in #89. Three extraordinary women were invited to visit Kandor as part of the new cultural-exchange program Kandorians had created, and Lois tagged along to cover the story. Let's just turn off our brains right now and not even think about why this makes no sense; it will only slow us down.

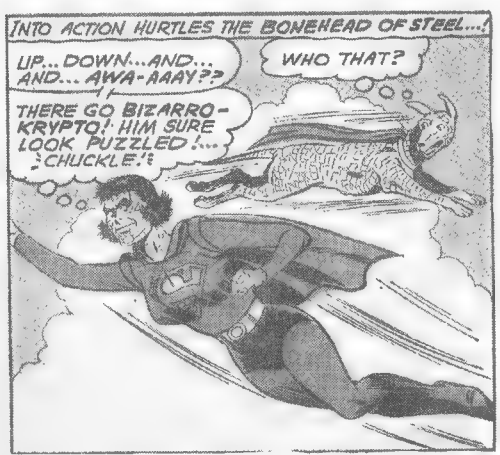
Super (sort of) Lois!

Lois probably regretted jilting Van-Zee after he gave Lois look-alike Sylvia permanent super-powers in* Lois Lane *#17.

Not only did Lois gain super-powers an awful lot in the Silver Age, but even people who *looked like* Lois often tended to find themselves flying around.

The first of these near-Loises was noted in ***CBG*** #1616's Top 15 Silver Age Weddings and took place in *Lois* #15 (Feb 60). In that three-part, novel-length adventure, Lois rejected the romantic overtures of stranded Kandorian Van-Zee, so he searched the world over and finally found true love in the person of Sylvia, who resembled Lois right down to her weird hairstyle.

During the course of the adventure (which we were sneakily led to believe featured Superman and Lois), Van concocted a serum from an ultra-rare element that could give super-powers to an Earth person with Sylvia's blood type. Our Super-Lois look-alike spent the rest of the issue chasing after her super-kids and flying through the cosmos with them when she left her super-husband.



Dang! Even Bizarro-Lois gained super-powers to become Stupor-Woman in* Adventure *#17.

Sylvia returned to show off her Super-Lois powers in *Lois* #78 (Oct 78). She played a small role in the story, mostly to give us that oh-so-appealing cover that showed bullets bouncing off a woman who appeared to be Lois.

Exactly one year later, Lois gained super-powers once again, making it four October issues out of eight between 1961 and 1968 in which Lois' super-powers were a key plot point. Strangely, Lois powers also showed up in four out of 10 February issues between 1960 and 1969 and three Augusts out of five between 1964 and 1968. Was it coincidence ... or something else?

Barely missing these super-Lois peaks was one more adventure, in *Adventure Comics* #288 (Sep 61). This time, Bizarro-Lois was granted super-powers by Bizarro-Mr. Mxyzptlk, who was impressed that she brought him gifts while he was in jail. Is that a Bizarro response? Bizarros confuse me too much to know for sure. In any event, Bizarro Lois gained the usual powers, tailored one of her husband's suits to fit her svelte figure, and became Stupor-Woman!

She spent the tale doing Bizarro-good deeds (digging up awful roses, *etc.*) and hiding her super-identity from her husband (in stupid ways, of course). Is that Bizarro behavior, or would Super-Lois also do good deeds and hide her identity? Before my head could hurt too much thinking about such questions, the real Mr. Mxyzptlk showed up and used his magic to take away Stupor-Woman's powers and make everyone forget about her. Good idea.

In Kandor, Lois met Dr. Cor-Lar, who gave Lois a potion that granted her the usual super-powers. (The potion didn't work on Kandorians.) She retained her powers when she left Kandor, amazing her super-boyfriend, since she had no vulnerability to kryptonite and could save him from it (hence our title). So, naturally, Superman proposed.

But the serum also gave Lois severe withdrawal symptoms that only the doctor could stop — if Lois did her bidding. Doc Lar gave Lois a pink super-suit complete with an "SL" emblem, and Lois proceeded to do as she was told to stop the insanity (and retain her powers in the bargain). The doc soon stranded Super-Lois in Kandor and took her place on Earth to win Superman for herself. But Lois escaped and returned to Earth, where Super-Lois defeated Super-Cor with the help of a piece of long-forgotten kandorite. You still have your brain turned off from last issue, right?

To honor all that Super-Lois had done for them during her visit, the Kandorians erected a gigantic statue to her super-self. "My Super-Lois days are gone forever," she sighed accurately to her former super-fiancé. Supes assured Lois that, in his book, she'd always be super. But I'm almost positive, looking back over this long and spotty career, that he meant that sentiment only in a figurative sense.

A clumsy Superwoman couldn't even find a dance partner at her own ball in* Superman *#45.

Golden Age Super-Lois!

By the time Lois reached the Silver Age, she'd had practice being Super-Lois, thanks to several super-powered adventures back in the Golden Age.

Her first venture as "Lois Lane — Superwoman!" came in *Action Comics* #60 (May 43), when she was injured in an accident and dreamed that a blood transfusion from Superman gave her super-powers. She quickly donned a sleeveless and gloved super-suit, righting wrongs and saving Clark Kent from danger. When Clark recognized her, she explained what had happened.

When she later saved Superman from the dastardly Dr. Skowl's deathtrap, she proposed to her super-boyfriend, and The Man of Steel had no choice except to accept. But just as they learned that Clark had revealed her identity in *The Planet*, she woke up.

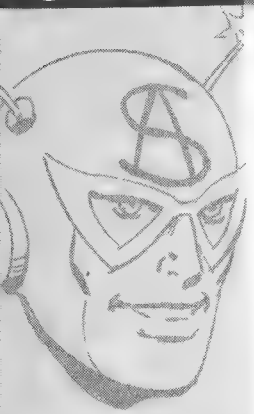
She recycled the title with a new plot in "Lois Lane, Superwoman!" in *Superman* #45 (Mar 47), in which her super-powers actually were a hoax by Superman to protect his identity. As sometimes happened (even more often in the Silver Age), Clark saved Lois by changing to Superman in front of Hocus and Pocus, two incompetent magicians. Clark pretended their magic had turned him into Superman for that moment, so, when they magically gave Lois super-powers, Supes had to make their magic come true or find another reason that their magic had turned Clark into Superman.

As usual, that sly Superman found ways to ensure Lois didn't enjoy her super-powers, culminating in a dance held in her honor in which Super-Woman (actually Superman) smashed the toes of every fella she danced with. So she had the magicians remove her powers, and The Man of Steel breathed a super-sigh of relief.

It also appears that Lois gained super-powers in *Action* #137 (Oct 49), judging from the cover posted at the Grand Comics Database (*www.comics.org*). Sadly, there's no plot synopsis, and the story's title, "The Man with the Charmed Life," makes it sound as if Lois' role might have been a minor story point to give us a dramatic cover (if it happened at all). If you have a copy of that issue sitting around, write and let us know if it featured Super-Lois.

Finally, Lois downgraded herself to "The Girl of Steel" in *Action* #156 (May 51), when Lex Luthor accidentally gave her super-powers. Hey, it happens. She used a blonde wig to hide her identity this time, which made her look a lot like another super-relative we'd be meeting in a few years. And it got her warmed up for the barrage of times she'd become Super-Lois once the Silver Age kicked off.

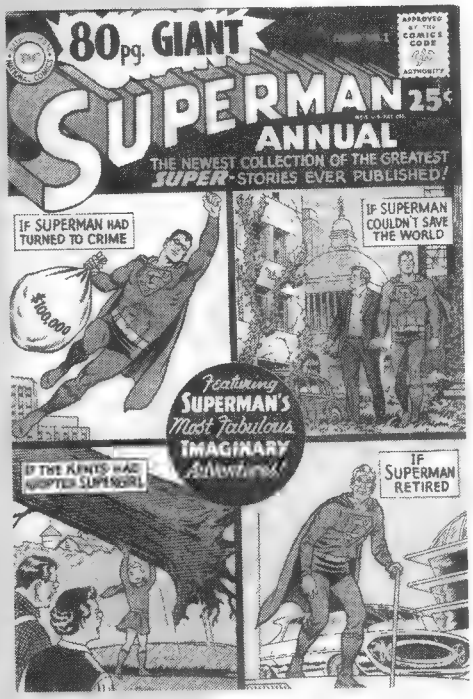
Superwoman made a little proposal of her own, once she gained super-powers in* Action *#60.



Mr. Silver Age Mail Chute — Extra!

COVERS, AMNESIA, & EXPERTINESS

by **CRAIG SHUTT**



Eliminating the black type (but not the yellow outline) for "Giant" on this* Giant Superman Annual *cover allowed it to become* 80-Page Giant *#1.

Dear Mr. Silver Age: In response to your selection of your 10 Favorite Comics Covers (in ***CBG*** #1603) and the response you ran from William McGee Jr. (***CBG*** #1607), whose list I liked, I wanted to offer my own list. I restricted myself to comics I actually read at the time they came out versus the many I have collected over the years since:

1. *Justice League of America* #21 (Aug 63): "Crisis on Earth-One!"

2. *Superman* #165 (Nov 63). "Beauty & The Super-Beast!"

3. *Superman* #169 (May 64). "The Bizarro Invasion of Earth!"

4. *Fantastic Four Annual* #2 (Summer 64). "The Fantastic Origin of Doctor Doom!"

5. *Amazing Spider-Man Annual* #1 (Summer 64). "The Sinister Six!"

6. *Strange Tales* #121 (Jun 64). "Witchcraft in the Wax Museum!"

7. *Our Army at War* #159 (Oct 65). "The Blind Gun"

8. *Superman* #166 (Aug 66). "The Sons of Superman!"

9. *The Flash* #166 (Nov 66). "Tempting Target of the Temperature Twins!"

10. *Action Comics* # 354 (Sep 67). "Captain Incredible!"

Also, I've always wondered if there was a *Superman Annual* #9. I thought I saw one, somewhere.

William Greer
madriddobermanblack@yahoo.com

(Thanks for your covers list, William! Some of yours are pretty quirky — three Superman covers from the #160s indicates that probably was your Golden Age. But that's the beauty of a favorites list: No one else's will be the same.

***Superman Annual** #9 was planned but, at the last minute, it became the first issue of the new **80-Page Giant** title instead. You can see the outline of the original "Giant" lettering around the flat "80-Page Giant" name on the cover. **Annual** #9 finally came out in 1983, and another one came out in 1997 for the new series, but I imagine you're looking for the 1960s one. It exists, under a different name. — MSA)*

Dear Mr. Silver Age: In your Retroviews of *Amazing Spider-Man* #51-80 (***CBG*** #1596), you seem to feel that the scenes with Norman Osborn/Green Goblin were meant as a tease that would not pay off for a long time.

In fact, these scenes were meant to promote the *new* Green Goblin story that would appear in the 35¢ magazine-sized *Spectacular Spider-Man* #2 (Nov 68), not a long wait at all!

Someone reading these stories from reprints might not be aware of this detail, since they don't see the promotional bulletins that appear in the original magazines. But I would expect a Silver Age "expert" to have this fact at hand.

Mark Linder
405 Broadway, #709
Cincinnati OH 45202

*(Thanks for reminding me of that Gobby appearance, Mark! You are correct in thinking that, when **CBG** asked me to write one-paragraph capsule reviews of the first 100 issues of **Amazing Spider-Man**, I relied on the **Essential** collections rather than crack open*

my CGC-encased Mint issues. (Actually, that much handling of my beat-up comics would've caused them to disintegrate, and I decided to avoid that.)

I often use reprints for reference (and even illustrations), as they're much easier to flip through to find a key scene. I hesitate to refer to Marvel's 1970s periodical reprints, since they sometimes deleted pages, which could affect my commentary. Whether I would've noticed that house ad in the original is hard to say — I know I wouldn't have been stopping to read the Bullpen Bulletins! Regardless, I wish I'd remembered that Gobby appearance and mentioned it.

*As to your "expert" chiding, **CBG** readers picturing me as some sort of Silver Age Brainiac 5 should replace that image with one of a Silver Age Wizard of Oz. I always appreciate fans who correct inaccuracies in my column, although it kills me to learn about them and I strive mightily to avoid them. But, if it's a competition, bet on the assembled hordes of fandom versus my expertiness. On every topic I discuss, I'm resigned to the fact that there's someone who knows more about it than I do — it's just not the same person. And, as we stress around here all the time, they're **all** easy if you know them. — MSA)*

Dear Mr. Silver Age: Why is there such an ethical dilemma with *Identity Crisis*, over erasing memories of characters? In *Justice League of America* #19 (May 63), our heroes' identities were revealed in battles with their doubles. The League used gas to wipe out memories of this, worldwide. Eliminating the memories was proper with no controversy.

Richard M. Brown
2326 Cabot
Detroit MI 48209

*(It's true that Silver Age super-heroes often eliminated memories without a squawk from readers, as I noted in my two-part column on great Silver Age amnesia stories in **CBG** #1609-10. But I think there are key reasons long-time fans consider the events in **Identity Crisis** to be a different matter.*

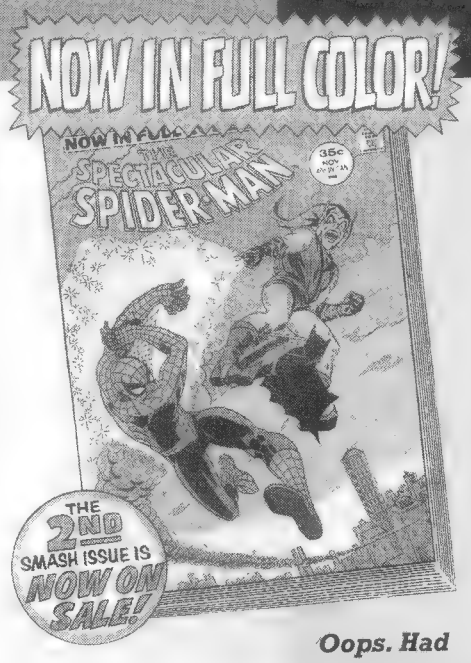
*Foremost was that plot devices such as in **JLA** #19, where Superman used amnesium to erase the entire world's memory of the team's secret identities, were a quick wrap-up point. The goal was to give us a "happily ever after" conclusion that left no dangling threads.*

*Memory-erasing in the Silver Age also worked in some magical, otherwise harmless way, thanks to super-heroes being supremely skilled. As noted in **CBG** #1609, simply waving amnesium in front of people made them forget the exact memory you wanted erased — and nothing else. What a deal!*

*The **Identity Crisis** mind-tinkering involved more than simply memory erasing, after they voted to tinker further. Zatanna stated it wasn't an easy thing to do — and she botched it. That danger, coupled with the literal hands-on nature of the mind-manipulation, made it more intense and personal than waving amnesium around, especially as it served as the catalyst for the story, rather than as a last-minute, wrapping-up point.*

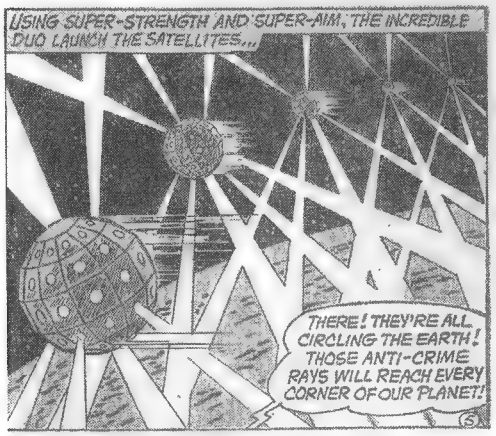
That the heroes agreed to do something that obviously was dangerous for the sole purpose of reducing the level of concern they had to feel for their loved ones' safety made them seem less heroic than some Silver Age fans expect from super-heroes.

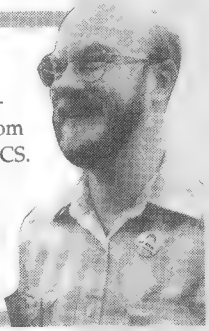
*To be sure, Silver Age heroes were known to wipe out evil thoughts, too. Superman-Red and Superman-Blue achieved that with their "anti-evil hypno-ray" in the classic **Superman** #162 (Jul 63). But, again, that was done impersonally, with rays beamed down from outer space — which worked perfectly. And it was an Imaginary Story, where motivations and nuances often were left in the dust. — MSA)*



Oops. Had Mr. Silver Age seen this house ad, he might not have complained in his Spidey Retroviews about the dearth of Gobby appearances.

Sadly, the current Hawkman doesn't own the anti-evil ray that was used so effectively in Superman #162.





Known to fans worldwide as "Mr. Silver Age," **CRAIG SHUTT** has waxed nostalgic about comics of old in CBG since 1992. His latest book, ***Baby Boomer Comics***, is available from F+W Publications at (800) 258-0529, offer CBHCS. Got a question about the Silver Age? Drop him a line at **craigshutt@ameritech.net**. And visit him on the Web at his Forum section of **www.cbgxtra.com**.

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From the X-Mansion to Themyscira

REVELATIONS OF CHARACTER

by **ANDREW SMITH**

This issue's theme is the life and times of The Amazing Amazon, and I do have an interesting Wonder Woman question in the Mailbag from long-time Legionnaire **DonFromBarre**. He also has a few other questions, so let's tackle them all:

Dear Cap: I just wanted to run a few *X-Men 3* movie things by you for your thoughts.

1) For a while now I've been questioning Kelsey Grammer as The Beast. Am I the only one who looks at this right now in a "Before seeing it, Keaton as Batman" sort of way, or does his scholarly image from his former role as Frasier make him a natural? I guess what I'm saying is that I'll have to be convinced that he can do Hank McCoy.

2) Then today I read a piece that one of the plot elements is a mutant cure and that Warren (The Angel) Worthington's father is among those developing it. Presumably to "cure" his son. Would he have to go this route? Wouldn't removing the wings surgically be just as effective, at least outwardly? I assume Angel's bones are hollow, as are those of birds. Would Daddy want to get rid of that, too?

3) And, on a separate note, some day when I have more time (lots more), I'd like to discuss the idea of Batman and Superman not agreeing with Wonder Woman killing Max Lord, even after Lord's admission that he could, and likely would, take control of Superman again.

***The Captain** responds:*

Great questions, Don. Let's tackle them in order:

1) You and I are probably not alone in having learned a lesson from the Keaton-as-Batman experience. As your letter reminds us, many fans (myself among them) went bananas when Michael Keaton — at that point, mostly known as a comedian — was tapped for Tim Burton's Batsuit in 1989's *Batman*.

"Mr. Mom as The Dark Knight?" I wailed. "It's Adam West all over again!" Not that I hated the 1966 *Batman* TV show, but I was well aware that it had cemented in the public mind that The Dynamic Duo (and, to some degree, super-heroes in general) were a joke. I wanted a movie that would show the *hoi polloi* what we Bat-fans had always known: that Batman was one of the best adventure characters of the century. Plus, you know, I was tired of the

In his earliest appearances, Iceman had a snowier countenance.

Wham!Pow!Zap! jokes at our hobby's expense. And I was afraid, based on reputation, that Keaton would do schtick throughout, permanently infantilizing The Gotham Guardian.

Boy, was I barking up the wrong Batarang.

Not only was Burton's Batman 180º from William Dozier's TV show in tone, but Keaton was impressive as a conflicted Bruce Wayne. Maybe he didn't have the build for a credible Caped Crusader, but, with that suit, who cared? Moreover, with the introduction of serious themes to the Bat-mythos for millions of moviegoers, Batman was resurrected as a dark creature of the night, liberated at last from "camp" Hell. Thanks largely to Burton, of course, but Keaton more than pulled his weight.

All of which is to say: Kelsey Grammer as The Beast? Well, why not? We know he's got acting abilities, and the character's action scenes (if any) will likely rely on CGI and stunt doubles. Depending on the script and direction, I don't have any problem with it. As with most things, the proof will be in the execution — and, after my knee-jerk, and erroneous, response to Keaton as Batman, I will never again pre-judge. Let's cross our fingers — as we have with the franchise overall through two successful films — and see how it goes. I remain optimistic until and unless I'm proven wrong.

2) Your questions about The Angel bring up an old hobbyhorse of mine, Don. Or, as I used to call him, "The Flying Target."

Back in the early '60s, when the world was young and The X-Men were the weak sisters of the nascent Marvel universe, the Li'l Cap'n thought Warren Worthington was the weakest of the bunch. And that's saying a lot: The Beast did little more than hop around and use big words, Marvel Girl had a tendency to pass out when asked to do more than pose prettily, and Iceman was, at that point, Frosty the Snowman (or, as E. Nelson Bridwell parodied him, Winter Wonderlad). Aside from Cyclops, the Li'l Cap'n of 1964 couldn't imagine The X-Kids surviving an encounter with, oh, I dunno, Paste-Pot Pete.

But even by early X-Men standards, so the Li'l Cap'n thought, The Angel was useless. And when rereading those early stories today, I

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Superman could ignore The Lasso of Truth, but Diana can't. It's a downside to her concept, but it is part of her concept.

note that Angel's primary role in most battle scenes was to be taken out (or taken hostage) straightaway. Take a look at those stories in *Marvel Masterworks* or *Essentials* and see if you don't agree.

OK, Angel fans, hands off the keyboard. The Li'l Cap'n grew up — and so did comics characters. Writers began using The Angel (and other winged characters, like Hawkman) more effectively: for reconnaissance, for aerial bombardment, for speed, for transportation, for in-flight rescue. And, of course, winged characters are visually cool as all get-out. I grew to appreciate Angel, Hawkman, and other junior birdmen intellectually for what they could bring to a team book.

But old prejudices die hard, and, in the back of my head, I still see The Angel as baggage on X-teams that have mutants who can fly and bring raw power to the table, like Polaris, the new Marvel Girl, Sunfire, and the like. I mean, what's Angel really going to do to The Blob and Magneto? Fly in circles and make them dizzy? Keep them entertained with bird impressions until the big hitters arrive? Hold Storm's cape while she does the heavy lifting?

This prejudice was reinforced when it was revealed in the early '80s that Warren Worthington did, indeed, have hollow bones. This revelation answered the 20-year-old question of how Angel could possibly achieve lift. Fans (me among them) had pointed out for years that the mathematics of bird flight would require his wingspan to be something like 24 feet to raise 180 pounds or so off the ground, a wingspan he obviously didn't have. So the hollow-bones thing answered one question (he was much lighter than he looked), but it raised another: Wouldn't he be The Man of Glass? That is to say, what do you imagine is going to happen to a fist composed of hollow bones when it hits The Juggernaut? Wouldn't he be, you know, a little too fragile for super-hero combat? Even if those bones were preternaturally strong, they were still hollow! This distracted the not-so-Li'l Cap'n through story after story, collapsing his suspension of disbelief.

I suspect many writers over the years struggled with The Angel's utility as much as I did: at least, judging by all the attempts to upgrade him over the years, once as Archangel, then with a secondary "healing" mutation, but more often than not by simply writing him out of the book. As they are doing once again, if current stories are any indication.

Where was I going with this? Hmm. Appar-

ently I was just taking my hobbyhorse out for a canter. Sorry.

Anyway, to answer your question: No, I don't think amputation would work. Sure, you could cut the wings off, but for those things to be functional — which they obviously are — the muscles, tendons, and skeletal structure of his torso would be vastly mutated, too. His eyes and hearing, along with related physiology, would work differently from ours in order for him to see and hear in flight. His posture and muscular mechanics would be widely divergent from the norm with or without wings. Plus he'd still have the hollow bones.

3) The debate over Wonder Woman offing Max Lord has eaten up dozens of pages on my message board, so I know it's a hot button. Some people just can't get past the "heroes don't kill" mantra, which, as a Silver Age veteran, I fully understand and sympathize with.

But, that said, it registers a thumbs-up from The Captain. Here are some reasons:

1) It's not the Silver Age any more.

Times change, and our heroes must change with them, if they're to remain relevant. If Wonder Woman (and other heroes) remain locked in the past, they will continue to sell only to a smaller and smaller demographic. I may be of the Silver Age but I fully accept that I — and the world — aren't in it any more. And neither is Wonder Woman. She doesn't have to be a killer but she *is* going to have to be less of a fairy princess.

2) Lord said, under the influence of The Lasso of Truth, that there was no other way to stop him. Truth is an absolute (and in this case virtually divine instruction) and it can't be argued with (at least by Diana of Themyscira, who has been shown to obey her gods unequivocally). That narrows the options, for Wonder Woman at least, to pretty much zero. Superman could ignore The Lasso of Truth, but Diana can't. It's a downside to her concept, but it is part of her concept.

3) The Amazing Amazon, and other heroes, have traditionally always found another way to deal with a problem besides killing an opponent. That's a wonderful fantasy, and we are all here for a little fantasy, but let's face it: The writers always gave them a way out. This time, Diana wasn't provided a facile escape. Y'know, the way it is in real life. And Lord was a killer who had the most powerful engine of destruction on Earth at his disposal. Any solution that would allow him to come back later and kill again would be something I wouldn't want on my conscience — or to have to explain to the families of someone Max killed.

4) At least two of the three people in that room had died before and come back. (I'm not sure, but I think Max was "dead" once, too.) Death isn't exactly the immutable thing in the DC universe that is here on Earth-Prime. Let's keep that in mind.

5) This scene is true to the character.

The warrior aspect of Themyscira is one we've been told over and over again is intrinsic to Wonder Woman's origins — but to date it's only been lip service. Well, we saw it sometimes in Elseworlds like *Kingdom Come* or *DC: The New Frontier*. Now, we're seeing it in the mainstream books, and I'm glad to see the hypocrisy melt away. As heretical as this may sound, I'm seeing Diana's action *vis-à-vis* Max Lord as the character finally living up to her potential — as being who and what she really is. Of the ramifications of her warrior aspect coming home to roost.

I mean, this is a woman who comes from a society based on ancient Greek combat! How many prisoners did the Achaens take at Troy? Her

This is a woman who comes from a society based on ancient Greek combat!

Batman's become so isolated that he's actually had a mental breakdown.

traditional weapons, which we've seen in her "combat armor" in stories like "Our Worlds at War," are swords and spears! "Ambassador of peace" or not, this woman was brought up to kill her opponents! Which, to date, has kinda been glossed over in favor of her peacemaker aspect. But her warrior code has always been there: the elephant in the room.

Even so, I've still got one of my own feet firmly planted in the "heroes don't kill" camp, and I'd still be bothered by this scene, if it came out of the blue or was simply being played for shock value or as a writer scrambling for some way to advance a mediocre story.

But, to me, it's not. Which brings me to:

6) It's part of a bigger picture — *Infinite Crisis* (or "*I-Cry*") — where I perceive the same thing happening to Batman and Superman.

What's been my biggest complaint about Batman for the last several years? That he's gone psycho. That his personality has become so extreme that he's driven off all his allies. That he's so secretive and manipulative that he's straddling the line between hero and villain.

And what have we seen in *I-Cry*? That's right: Batman is living up (or down) to his concept, too. He's dissolved The Justice League, his paranoia has accidentally unleashed another lethal threat (Brother I) that's killing hundreds of civilians, and he's become so isolated that he's actually had a mental breakdown. ("I can't breathe. Can't ... do this anymore," *Infinite Crisis* #3, Feb 06.)

For years, we've been told how ruthless, paranoid, and Machiavellian Batman was. But somehow everything was still OK, and he was still welcome at super-hero confabs (even though I think he should have been arrested for the Justice Protocols alone). Now, we're seeing the logical result of that behavior — and it's not any prettier than Diana breaking Max's neck.

As for Superman, for years I've been complaining that the post-*Crisis on Infinite Earths* Superman hasn't been very super or very inspiring. A whiner, to tell you the truth. A hand-wringing, ineffectual Boy Scout who mouths platitudes that the rest of his spandex crowd can't possibly live up to, because they don't have the benefit of being invulnerable.

And now we're seeing that play out logically in *I-Cry*. Instead of Superman being artificially written as the rallying point, he is, instead, almost irrelevant. "Let's face it, 'Superman' ... the last time you really inspired anyone ... was when you were dead," quoth The Batman (*Infinite Crisis* #1, Dec 05). And, objectively, he's right. Why would the spandex brigade look to Superman to lead them in this Crisis? "Because he's Superman!" you say. Well, look at it from Green Arrow's POV or Elongated Man's. When death is knocking at your door, with half of DC's second bananas already viciously murdered, you don't want Pollyanna as your leader, nagging at you to be careful not to hurt anyone.

Again: For years I've suspected (sadly) that Superman's inflexible moral code is an anachronism, given today's ultra-lethal villains. It worked great when he dealt with giant turtle boys and imps from the eighth dimension, but, faced with the likes of Doctor Light, The Society, and Max Lord, can he — and, more importantly, non-invulnerable heroes — still be ultra-tolerant, still pat villains on the head and send them to jail with a wink to the audience and a few words about the importance of dental hygiene? We'd all like for that

to be the way of the world ... but, increasingly, especially in the DC universe, that attitude looks naïve and wildly out of touch. Ask Phantom Lady.

Of course, over the years the writers have always given him an out, let him look good, even when his approach was increasingly impractical. But *I-Cry* isn't giving him the out, isn't ignoring the price he'd have to pay for living up to an absolute. And one of those prices is irrelevance to other heroes fighting for their lives and the lives of their loved ones. And their scorn is what we are now seeing, to his (and our) dismay.

So, to my mind, what we saw with Wonder Woman was the natural progression of the character to the extremes of her philosophy, as we've seen the natural progression of Batman and Superman, to the point at which we're seeing the downsides of their respective ideologies. And we're seeing how different The Big Three really are in their respective worldviews — and how little they really have in common. And, since it's a vital part of the thematic structure of *I-Cry*, I don't see it as writer's fiat — it's telling readers metatextual truths that are going to have to be overcome for these three to once again be friends and allies and to forge the foundation of the post-*I-Cry* universe.

That is to say: Superman's going to have to learn to be more inspiring — and relevant. Batman's going to have to work and play better with others. And Wonder Woman's going to have to deal with her warrior aspect, and not just the peace-bringer part. That's the story I see playing out: The Big Three relearning how to be the vital core they once were, reinventing themselves as inspiring characters for a new generation of heroes (and readers) by dealing with the subtextual faults in their concepts. And, for these heroes to deal with these issues, we have to see why they have to. Which, to me, is the dramatic engine of *I-Cry*.

So I agree with the unhappy fans that Wonder Woman's action was sickening. That it was disturbing. But I think it was true to what we've been told but never shown about the character, and it's intrinsic to a larger story in which the same theme is playing out with other major characters.

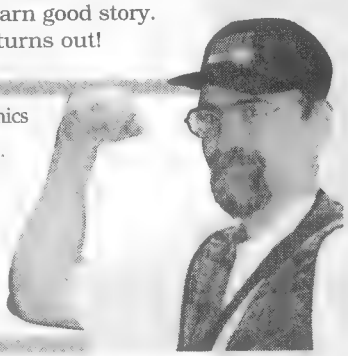
Which, in a roundabout way, brings us to your actual remarks, Don. You imply disagreement with Superman and Batman taking Wonder Woman to task for killing Max Lord.

I agree: They're both being hypocritical. Batman, as usual, is expecting everyone to play by whatever rules he happens to set for them, as if he is somehow a moral arbiter, when he's shown himself to be both erratic and untrustworthy. (How can he lecture anyone, when Brother I is killing hundreds? When he's let two out of four sidekicks be killed? When the Justice Protocols nearly wiped out The League?) And Superman is once again insisting on his personal moral code for everyone without offering the slightest explanation of

how people who *aren't* Superman might be able to live that way and survive the day. (And correct me if I'm wrong, but wasn't his weakness — his being mentally controlled by Max Lord — the root of the problem?)

So, yeah, I think they're both being hypocritical. But I also think they're being true to the flaws inherent in the way they've been presented since the last *Crisis*, flaws which have been studiously glossed over for 20 years. And we're seeing exactly why The Big Three shouldn't get along as well as they have, as currently characterized. And why changes are necessary, if they are ever to get along again.

Which, to me, makes it a darn good story. And I can't wait to see how it turns out!



Author of the syndicated comics column "Captain Comics", **ANDREW SMITH** has written more than 200 *CBG* columns. Check out his message board at **www.captaincomics.us**, or send your questions to him at **capncomics@aol.com**!

THE BATWOMAN: A comics trailblazer

by **FRED GRANDINETTI**

***Batwoman got her start in* Detective Comics #233 (Jul 56).**

When the *Catwoman* feature film was released in July 2004, it garnered a lot of press discussing the career of The Feline Felon and the fate that befell her comics career in the mid-1950s.

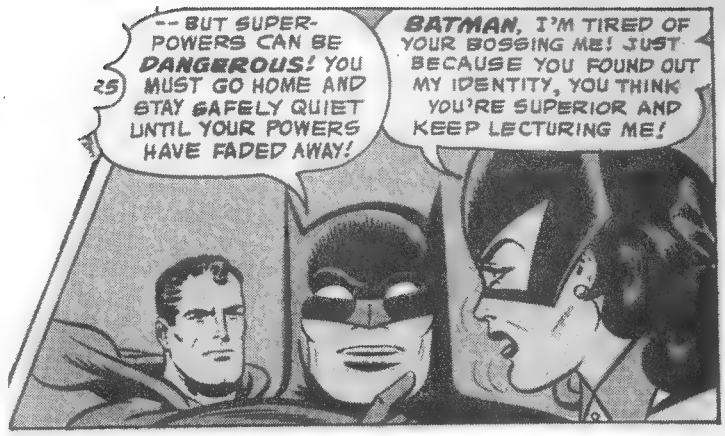
Some said that her forced "retirement" was due to the Comics Code, which wouldn't allow women of such allure in the pages of Batman's adventures; others say it may have had to do with the arrival of another female whose popularity among readers kept The Catwoman catnapping during the late 1950s through the mid-1960s.

Though she has not appeared on a regular basis in the comic books for more than two decades, Kathy Kane, The Batwoman, is still remembered with fondness by many. Perhaps, in part, that's because she was in Batman's life when his adventures were more lightweight: far from today's grim, dark, and often violent tales.

In the letters column in *Detective Comics#* 417 (Nov 71), a reader wrote, "I'd like to say a few words about the reaction some readers have to Batgirl. These are the readers who remember Batwoman and the other Bat-Girls from years back. These were characters invented when the time was right for bats. They were there because romance seemed to be needed in Batman's life. But thanks to the big change and a foresighted editor, these hapless females are gone for good. In their place stands a girl who really is a capable crime fighter, a far cry from the Batwoman who constantly had to be rescued by Batman." Apparently, this writer hadn't read many stories featuring Batwoman. Though she was created at a time where females were often seen crying for help and having males rescue them, Batwoman did her fair share of saving Batman and Robin from peril.

One likely factor in the creation of Batwoman was the advantage to protecting the trademark for such a character name. It has often been said that the reason there was a Batwoman was to throw water on those rumors as to what Batman and Robin did with each other during their time off. However, Batman's attraction to the opposite sex had already been solidly established with his feelings toward Selina Kyle, The Catwoman. The Catwoman, however, was a year and a half into her disappearance from the Batman stories, when Batwoman first graced the cover of *Detective Comics* #233 (Jul 56). The cover featured a dark-haired woman, wearing an oversized red mask, red cape, and a black and yellow body suit with a red weapons bag slung over her shoulder. She was seated on a red motorcycle with the Batmobile trailing behind. Robin exclaimed on seeing her, "Hurry Batman, The Batwoman is beating us on this mission!" Batwoman's costume was designed by Sheldon Moldoff, who worked with Batman's creator, Bob Kane (and other ghost artists and writers) during this period.

Batwoman was, in reality, heiress Kathy Kane, a one-time circus daredevil. Though a skilled performer, her dream was to fight crime, as her idol, Batman, did. When she inherited her uncle's fortune, she designed a costume, set up her own Bat-Cave, and stocked that cave with laboratory equipment, criminal files, and a red Bat-Cycle. In her debut, she showed up Batman at every turn, capturing criminals with the aid of her feminine weapons. As one crook charged at her, Batwoman pulled out a large powder puff and shook it. "She shook a whole cloud of powder in my face — achoo — can't stop sneezing!" exclaimed the approaching criminal.



Batman's attitude at Batwoman's arrival and her ability to catch criminals (and save his life) was rooted in the 1950s male mindset, with his primary concern being to stop her "interference." Batwoman slipped up by using circus slang, and, with that information, Batman deduced her true identity. Confronting Kathy in her Bat Cave, Batman warned that, if he could learn her true identity, crooks could do the same and she would be in mortal danger. Kathy agreed, though Batman's reasoning was shaky, since his detective skills were superior to those of the average gangster.

Reader reaction to Batwoman's first appearance was strong enough to bring her back in *Batman* #105 (Feb 57) in "The Challenge of The Batwoman." Thinking that a crook with amnesia was actually Batman, Kathy donned her costume again to help the "criminal" regain his crime-fighting ability. All was resolved, and Bat-

In* World's Finest Comics *#90 (Oct 57), Batman ordered Batwoman to "go home" and give up crimefighting, but later relented and gave her permission to continue her career.

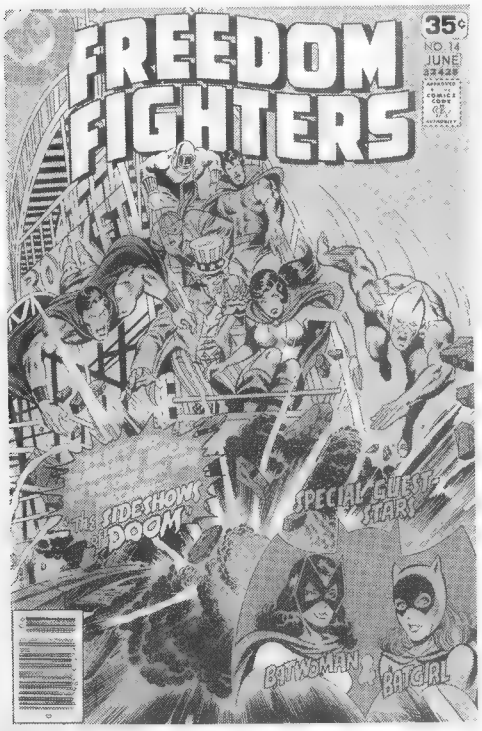
woman assisted Batman and Robin in capturing the Briggs gang. A turning point in Kathy's career would come in *World's Finest* #90 (Oct 57), when, after swallowing a capsule that gave super-powers for 24 hours, she became "The Super Batwoman." Batwoman took the capsule to prevent criminal Elton Craig from doing the same. Throughout the story, she attempted to discover the true identity of Batman, Robin, and Superman — but failed. She also assisted Superman in his super-duties to protect the city.

Once her powers had vanished and she realized she'd failed to learn the secret identities of the three males, Kathy, dejected, decided to give up being Batwoman. Batman, however, said to her, "No Batwoman, we think you've won. You showed such cleverness and courage that I can't ask you to drop your career completely, just be careful!" So, with his approval (shades of the late 1950s), Batwoman helped Batman, Robin, and (on occasion) Superman for the next seven years.

Two of Batwoman's best-known cover appearances displayed her role in the Batman stories. On the cover of *Batman* #126 (Sep 59), she was seen throwing a protective shield to protect the duo from a lethal beam of light provided by The Firefly. The cover of *Batman* #129 (Feb 60) featured a notable bondage cover, with Batwoman tied to a spinning fan by The Spinner and with Batman and Robin speeding to the rescue.

Although often assumed by readers today to have been passive, Batwoman did *not* have to be rescued by Batman or Robin in each of her appearances, even if the chauvinistic treatment of her crime-fighting abilities by the writers often alluded to it as some sort of fact. Batwoman ended up saving The Dynamic Duo from being drowned in bronze in "The Bronze Menace" in *Detective* #302 (Apr 62). Even so, there was a scene in which she was approached by three criminals and thought to herself, "Oh dear, too many for me to handle, I'm afraid," and Robin came to her aid.

Female members of the Bat-family joined forces in* Freedom Fighters *#14 (Jun 78).



In 1961, Kathy's niece, Betty donned a costume and became her partner, when she was in town, as the original Bat-Girl. Betty shared four out of Batwoman's six remaining crime-busting adventures.

It was clear that Batwoman was in love with Batman and had a rival for his affection in photographer Vicki Vale (Batman's Lois Lane). In *Batman* #153 (Feb 63), in the course of believing both he and Batwoman were to die, Batman admitted he did, indeed, love Batwoman. "I — I do love you! I never wanted to admit it before." The two shared a passionate kiss, but, when the danger had passed, Batman told Batwoman he'd said that to make what he'd thought would be her last moments happy ones. Batwoman wondered if that *was* the case — as did the readers.

In 1964, the "New Look" Batman arrived, and, for the most part, Batwoman and Kathy Kane vanished from the comic-book scene — aside from brief appearances in *World's Finest* in the mid-1960s and, of course, reprinted stories. When *Batman Family* arrived in 1975, there was renewed interest in The Batwoman, and, after appearing in two reprints, she returned to action in #10 (Mar 77). Editor and writer Bob Rozakis was reviving many older comic-book figures at this time. Kathy Kane, it was explained, left Gotham City to run a carnival and donned an updated version of her costume to help the current Batgirl (Barbara Gordon) battle Killer Moth and The Cavalier.

Kathy explained her reason for donning the costume again: "I've been in retirement for years, but when I heard The Cavalier was back in action, I decided to take the old costume out of mothballs." Gone were Batwoman's weapons and her Bat-Cycle, but she was welcomed back by the readership and returned again in *Batman Family* #14 (Oct 77), although most of the action in the tale was provided by Batgirl and Robin. In *Batman Family* #17 (Apr 78), Batwoman joined Batgirl and Earth-2's Huntress in battling Madame Zodiac, Poison Ivy, and The Catwoman. This was the first meeting of The Catwoman and Batwoman, though nothing was made out of it. Batwoman then shared a two-part adventure with Batgirl in *Freedom Fighters* #14-15 (Jun and Aug 78) before meeting her demise in *Detective Comics* #485 (Aug 79).

"We already had Batgirl, we didn't need Batwoman," was DC Editor Denny O'Neil's explanation for having Kathy Kane stabbed to death by The League of Assassins. Though Batman tried to rescue her, The Bronze Tiger knocked him out. "She died, clutching her costume, the clothes she once wore as Batwoman," Batman said on seeing her body. Readers were stunned. As one put it, "Though used infrequently, the character of Batwoman is too good to lose." Nevertheless, she was quickly forgotten, as The Caped Crusader was hurled him into a multi-part adventure with The League. It was clear that Batman forgot the great affection he'd once shared with this woman, since he was more concerned with how one blow from The Bronze Tiger could disable him than with the loss of a fellow crime fighter.

The Batwoman did return, however, in *The Brave and the Bold* #182 (Jan 82), a well-written and moving tale titled "Interlude on Earth-Two." The Batman of Earth-1 is struck by lightning and jolted to Earth-2, where he joined that world's grown-up Robin in battling one of Batman's earliest foes, Hugo Strange. Strange was using Starman's cosmic rod to recreate menaces from the original Batman's past to create havoc in Gotham City. Writer Alan Brennert had Batwoman join Robin and Batman and created a touching internal conflict among the three heroes. The grown-up Robin resented the Earth-1 Batman's treating him like a "junior partner." Batman felt uneasy on a world in which his older counterpart has died. And Batwoman was afraid she would fall in love again with a man she "could never have."

The first meeting between Batwoman and Batman evoked chills, when readers learned their thoughts. As Batman shook Batwoman's hand, he thought, "Kathy ... Oh Lord, Kathy, on my world you died last year! It's like touching a ghost ... but then I suppose that's what you're feeling too." Readers learned that, after the original Batman had married Earth-2's Catwoman, Batwoman had retired and started a family herself. Once the danger has passed and the Earth-1 Batman prepared to leave, he turned to Kathy and said, "I ... I knew someone very much like you once, Kathy! I'm ashamed to say I'd almost forgotten how much I cared for her! Thank you for making me remember." This excellent story was applauded by the readership and made the death of the Earth-1 Kathy Kane worth it ... well, almost!

The Earth-2 Batwoman made a cameo appearance in *The Brave and the Bold* #197 (Apr 83) in a tale featuring the events which led to the wedding of Bruce Wayne and Selina (Catwoman) Kyle, which was, again, well-written. The story was notable for the fact that Batwoman was wearing her costume as originally styled, rather than with the addition of the red bat-symbol she wore in her post-1977 appearances.

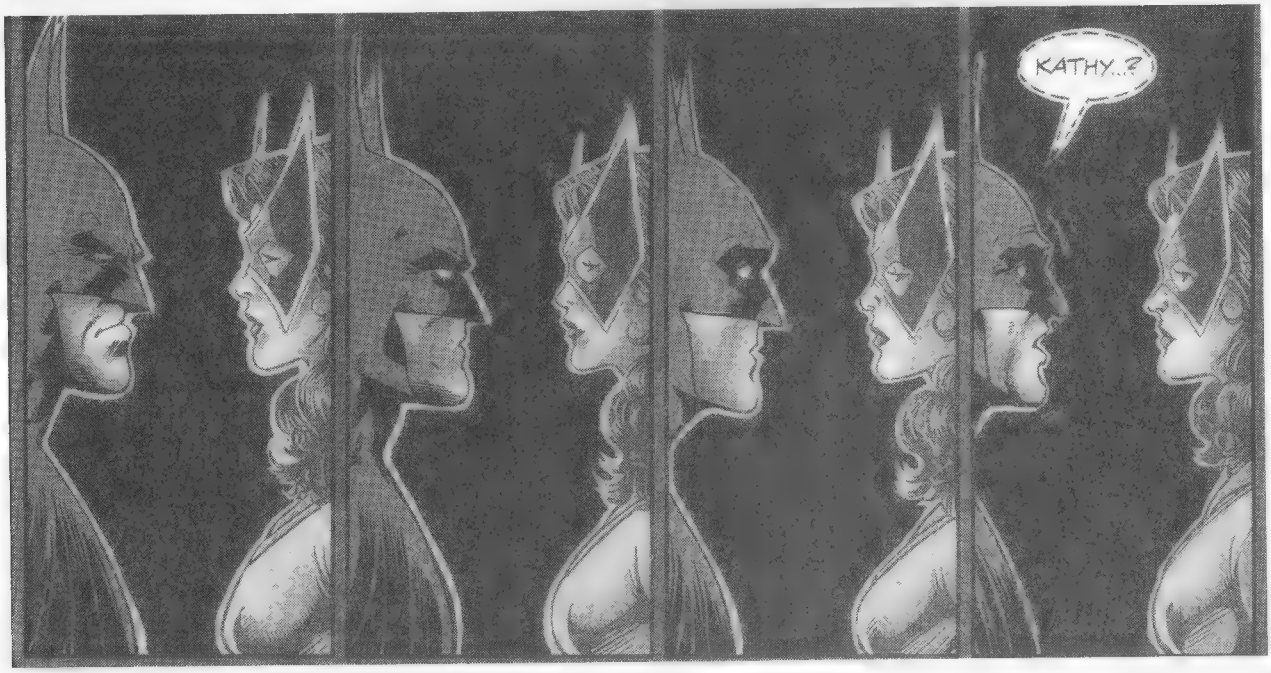
Then, *Crisis on Infinite Earths* hit the DC universe, causing more confusion as to who or what events were actually parts of Batman's history. There was no mention of Batwoman until *The Kingdom: Planet Krypton* #1 (Feb 99). In this story, a waitress, Rose D'Angelo, worked for a restaurant called "Planet Krypton," where she carried on one-sided conversations with heroes and heroines supposedly no longer a part of current comics continuity — one of them being The Batwoman.

Beautifully illustrated by Barry Kitson, a silent Batwoman appeared in nine panels and had a confrontation with Batman, when he investigated these apparitions. Batman confronted a Batwoman he couldn't remember, since she wasn't a part of his present memories. He stared at her, first with a grim expression that got softer with each of the four panels, until he said softly, "Kathy?"

Batman deduced that the figures weren't ghosts but "echoes ... as unlikely as it sounds, reflections of realities similar to our own, though divergent." Rose asked him, "Is that why you recognized that woman?" Batman replied, "It's impossible for me to know her." However, this was DC's attempt to undo some of what had gone on in the *Crisis* series, creating a way for such characters as Batwoman to come back — someday.

Regardless of her future, The Batwoman, the first female counterpart to an iconic male hero in the DC universe, was a trailblazer.

Batman had a "reunnion" with Batwoman in* The Kingdom: Planet Krypton *#1 (Feb 99).



DO YOU FEAR... THE HOODED HORSEMAN?

by **MICHELLE NOLAN**

Of the many knockoffs of The Lone Ranger, one of the most unorthodox was The Hooded Horseman from the quirky American Comics Group.

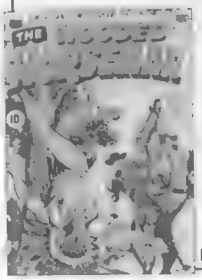
By the time The Hooded Horseman hit the newsstands as the new cover feature in *Blazing West* #14 (Dec 50), The Lone Ranger's hugely successful television program had been running for a year. Created for radio in 1933, the "daring and resourceful masked rider of the plains" wasn't the first Western hero to disguise his identity, yet he became by far the best known in popular culture, even including Zorro (a different sort of Western character, anyway).

The Hooded Horseman's cover appearances on *Blazing West* apparently convinced ACG Editor Richard Hughes to change the title of his only Western anthology to *The Hood-*

THE HOODED HORSEMAN™ *The Hooded Horseman* was not only the tiny American Comics Group's answer to Dell's *The Lone Ranger*, but also to the popularity in 1950 of two of the most popular *Lone Ranger* knockoffs: Marvel's *Black Rider* and Lev Gleason's *Black Diamond*. Those two masked heroes were introduced in *All-Western Winners* #2 (Win 49) and *Black Diamond* #9 (Mar 49), both taking their numbering from other titles. Likewise, ACG converted the three-year-old anthology title *Blazing West* to *The Hooded Horseman* with #21 (Feb 52), although The Hooded Horseman had made his debut in *Blazing West* #14 (Dec 50). ACG — for which two romance titles and the horror-fantasy title *Adventures into the Unknown* were long-running best-sellers — probably began The Hooded Horseman primarily in response to the television success of *The Lone Ranger*, who had been going great guns, so to speak, for a year on television before *Blazing West* #14 hit the newsstands.

Hooded Horseman #21 Feb 1952 ★★

Writer: Uncredited
Pencils: Uncredited
Inks: Uncredited
Cover: Ogden Whitney



Untitled Hooded Horseman story • 8 pp.

The Hooded Horseman's alter ego, Bud Fraser, disguises his miracle dog, Flash, but nearly sees the idea backfire when rustlers dognap his faithful canine ally.

The story is a generally grim Western fantasy typical of the series, but additional details of The Hooded Horseman's origin would have been helpful.

Untitled Injun Jones story • 8 pp.

Untitled Bantam Buckaroo • 7 pp.

Famous Western Lawmen • 2 pp.

The Texas Rangers • 2 pp.

Best CGC copy **9.0** — **Then 10¢ NOW $20**

ed Horseman with #21 (Feb 52). The anthology format never changed during the title's two different incarnations (see the Retroviews below), so The Hooded Horseman appeared in only 19 full-length stories, along with five three-page shorts in the second series starring Flash, his ultra-intelligent, wolflike dog.

The first version of The Hooded Horseman was unusual, to say the least. Unlike almost every other Western hero, his handsome horse essentially went nameless but was infrequently referred to as Bronc. Yet Flash, one of the most aggressive dogs in comic-book history, more than made up for that in the department of animal interest and heroics. Unlike DC's Rex the Wonder Dog, who soon came along in 1952, Flash was never portrayed as thinking in human terms. But Flash *did* respond in ways that made *The Hooded Horseman* pretty much a Western fantasy.

The introductory blurb on The Hooded Horseman story in #21 — the closest thing to an origin after the story in *Blazing West* #14 — summed up the character's style this way: "Yes, pardner, Bud Fraser has developed a handy knack of looking into ruckuses ever since his sheriff father shot it out with bandits back in Mesa City and died with his guns smoking! From that day, Bud has packed those guns, hunting down outlawry with his dog Flash and smashing it in the forbidding black garb of The Hooded Horseman!"

His not-so-forbidding garb was actually usually portrayed as either dark or light blue, however, except for an outrageously bright red bandana-type "hood" that covered everything except his ears, eyes, nose, mouth, and chin;

this hood made for a startling effect when his hat was knocked off.

Bud Fraser was anything but a shy sort. He could, and sometimes did, pass for a shady gunslinger. He wasn't the least bit hesitant to gun down baddies even when he wasn't dressed as The Hooded Horseman. Nor was he shy about showing up with Flash, leading people to ask the logical question, "Are you The Hooded Horseman?" He would never confirm that, of course.

Hooded Horseman #22 — Apr 1952 — ★★★

Writer: Uncredited
Pencils: Uncredited
Inks: Uncredited
Cover: Ogden Whitney

Untitled Hooded Horseman story • 8 pp.

Bud Fraser, The Hooded Horseman's alter ego, finds an Aztec treasure in the desert and foils a criminal plot to deprive the townspeople of the gold.

There's a fantastic, yet entertaining and anachronistic, element in which Bud Fraser blows a whistle so Flash can rescue him from being unfairly imprisoned.

Untitled Bantam Buckaroo story • 7 pp.

Badmen of the West • 1 pp.

Injun Jones • 8 pp.

Epics of the West — Jim Bowie • 3 pp.

Best CGC copy: 8.5

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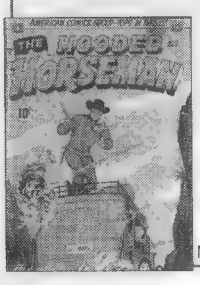
Hooded Horseman #23 — Jun 1952 — ★★★

Writer: Uncredited
Pencils: Uncredited
Inks: Uncredited
Cover: Ogden Whitney

Untitled Hooded Horseman story • 9 pp.

With the help of Flash's uncanny ability to jump through glass, The Hooded Horseman saves Annie Prescott's father from being hanged.



In typically quirky ACG style, the vicious Flash turns from crook-busting canine to yelping a humorous "arf, arf' in the final panel, as The Horseman kisses the heroine.

Untitled Injun Jones story • 7 pp.

Untitled Bantam Buckaroo story • 8 pp.

Bad Men of the West (Billy the Kid) • 3 pp.

Redskin Ruse • 2 pp.

No CGC copies

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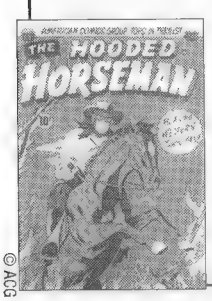
Hooded Horseman #24 — Aug 1952 — ★★★

Writer: Uncredited
Pencils: Uncredited
Inks: Uncredited
Cover: Ogden Whitney

Untitled Hooded Horseman story • 9 pp.

Bud Fraser again meets Stretch Brandon, an outlaw from his late father's past, and finally sends him to the hoosegow.



The Hooded Horseman appears in only a few panels, an odd decision, considering that the title of this anthology is named for the hero.

Untitled Injun Jones story • 8 pp.

Untitled Bantam Buckaroo story • 8 pp.

Unsung Western Heroes • 1 pp.

Sheep War • 1 pp.

No CGC copies

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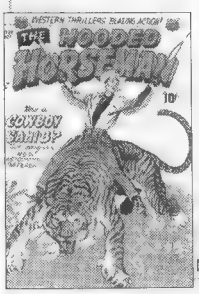
Hooded Horseman #25 — Oct 1952 — ★★

Writer: Uncredited
Pencils: Uncredited
Inks: Uncredited
Cover: Uncredited

Untitled Hooded Horseman story • 8 pp.

Outlaws discover The Hooded Horseman's identity as Bud Fraser, but a wounded Flash helps him kill the criminals to protect both settlers and his secret.



This is one of the oddest of all Western comics, with a cover given to Cowboy Sahib although he's not in the book. "Who is Cowboy Sahib? He's coming soon — New! Astounding! Different!" Yet all three main characters receive plugs for the next issue.

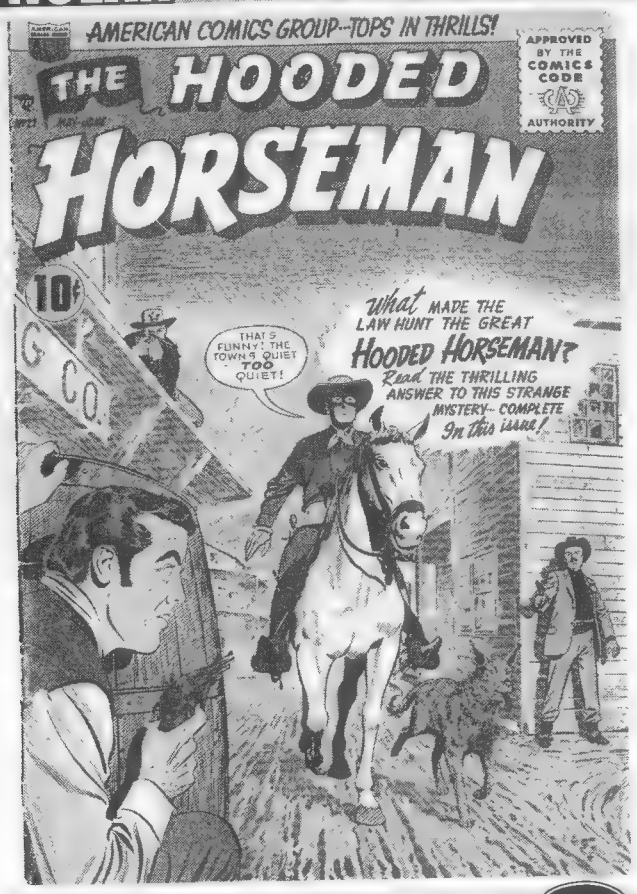
Untitled Injun Jones story • 8 pp.

Untitled Bantam Buckaroo story • 8 pp.

No CGC copies

Then 10c NOW $25

© ACG



In the outlandish story in #21, Bud goes after a gang of rustlers in Coyote Center by disguising Flash with "a bottle o' black hair dye." The rustlers have decided they need a vicious dog to combat Flash, so they unknowingly dognap The Horseman's disguised canine! The Horseman doesn't make his first appearance until page 6 of the eight-page story. Backed to the edge of a cliff, he quickly disarms a rustler of his knife and throws the blade toward Flash, cutting a rope and releasing the ferocious beast to save the day. Well, it is a little different. At the end of the tale, instead of riding off into the sunset, Bud Fraser claims "the kiss I didn't get last night" from the pretty young thing whose ranch he has saved.

Neither Bud Fraser nor his hooded alter ego hesitated to participate in frequently deadly gunplay for the rest of the first series, which ended with #27 (Feb 53). Sales apparently diminished on the crowded newsstands of 1952, however, because Cowboy Sahib — a new waddie who displayed Western heroics in India — was given the cover for the final three issues, beginning with #25 (Oct 52). It wasn't unheard-of for an anthology title to be named for its primary character — Harvey's *Green Hornet* was a good example for part of its 1940s run — yet it was unusual to see the character's name remain on a masthead when a different character was given the cover.

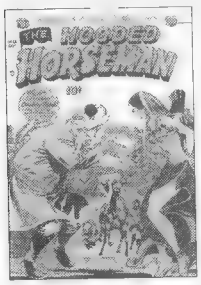
The Hooded Horseman's stories often included unintentionally hilarious lines, such as this one, as our hero prepares to leave a woman he has rescued in #26: "Shucks, ma'am ... seein' justice done is thanks enough

Hooded Horseman #26 Dec 1952 ★★★

Writer: Uncredited
Pencils: Leonard Starr
Inks: Starr
Cover: Uncredited

Untitled Cowboy Sahib story • 11 pp.

Cowboy Joe King, an Army airman from Wyoming, stays in India following the end of World War II and finds himself literally riding a tiger to defeat an evil sultan.



This colorful tale was one of the most original, if not wildly farfetched, to appear in all of comics in 1952. The most farfetched aspect finds the cowboy taking over as ruler of the "mountain principality of Larijuna."

Untitled Hooded Horseman story • 8 pp.

Untitled Injun Jones story • 8 pp.

No CGC copies

Then 10¢ NOW $30

Hooded Horseman #27 Feb 1953 ★★★

Writer: Uncredited
Pencils: Leonard Starr
Inks: Uncredited
Cover: Uncredited

Untitled Cowboy Sahib story • 11 pp.

Cowboy Sahib, trying to train fighters in India in the ways of the American West, defeats the giant Konchak the Cossack and rescues a native princess.

With action-packed stories like this, it's understandable how Editor Richard Hughes made Cowboy Sahib the new cover feature. The cliffhanger ending is frustrating for readers, however, since this was the last issue of the first series.

Untitled Hooded Horseman story • 8 pp.

Untitled Injun Jones story • 8 pp.

No CGC copies

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Hooded Horseman #18 Dec 1954 ★★★

Writer: Uncredited
Pencils: Ogden Whitney
Inks: Whitney
Cover: Whitney

Untitled Hooded Horseman story • 8 pp.

Flash the Miracle Dog lives up to his name while rescuing The Hooded Horseman from quicksand on the way to clearing an innocent man.

The series returned, picking up the numbering from Out of the Night #17. The Hooded Horseman's alter ego, Bud Fraser, disappears, and the stories begin their shift emphasizing character and plot over violence.

Untitled Cowboy Sahib story • 8 pp.

Konchak the Cossack returns in what was apparently an inventory story, only to die along with a communist villain in a plot against Cowboy Sahib.

No CGC copies

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Hooded Horseman #19 Feb 1955 ★★★

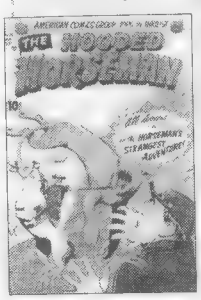
Writer: Uncredited
Pencils: Ogden Whitney
Inks: Whitney
Cover: Whitney

Untitled Hooded Horseman story • 8 pp.

The Hooded Horseman foils a plot by members of the military gone bad.

Untitled Flash, The Hooded Horseman's Miracle Dog story • 3 pp.

Flash prevents The Hooded Horseman's death at the teeth of a pack of javelinas, who go after the bad guys, instead.



The grisly fate of the villains is left to the reader's imagination, as the effects of the Comics Code begin to show even in the final pre-Code issue.

No CGC copies

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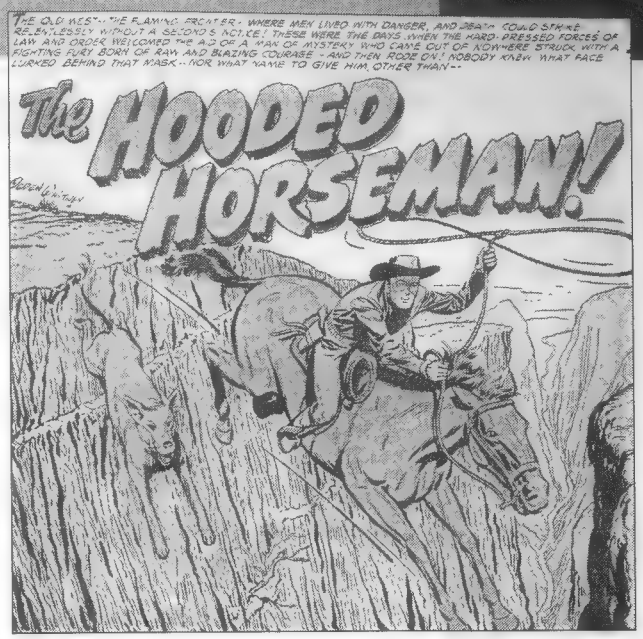
for me an' Flash! An' as for stayin' ... wal, we've got tuh keep ridin' tuh whar thar's action waitin'." Or how 'bout this one in #27, shouted to a woman he ultimately rescues: "Bushwackin' is a man's game, yuh little wildcat!"

Near the end of 1954, with the coming of the Comics Code Authority, ACG dropped its 17-issue run of the horror title *Out of the Night* and brought back *The Hooded Horseman* for #18 (Dec 54). But this was a much different Hooded Horseman, although his costume looked the same. The name of the character itself seemed out of synch with the Comics Code, and he lasted only five issues through #22 (Sep 55), although for many years collectors mistakenly thought the second series ran through #27.

No longer did The Hooded Horseman have an alter ego. He was never shown without his costume (!) and there was no mention of Bud Fraser. The ever-faithful Flash, however, was even more prominent (shades of TV's Rin Tin Tin). The "miracle dog," as he was dubbed, was even given his own series of short stories, meaning that both Flash the dog and Sterling Comics' four-issue run of *Captain Flash* were briefly on the newsstands in the year before DC brought back The Flash in *Showcase* #4 (Oct 56).

For the first panel of the Horseman's reappearance in #18, Hughes had the character, flanked by Flash, directly address the reader: "Howdy, folks! Yes, I'm the hombre they call The Hooded Horseman — an' me and muh dog Flash have helped justice in many a ruckus! Funny, but the most excitin' one of all didn't even have a single criminal or killer around — and yet it'll chase the chills up yore spine!" In this plot-driven tale with minimal violence, our hero prevents an innocent man from being framed.



And so it went for The Horseman's final four adventures, including three Code-approved stories. "Another rip-roaring adventure is coming your way next month!" promised the blurb at the end of the story in #22 (even though the title was always a bi-monthly). But The Hooded Horseman and Flash had ridden their last trail.

Hooded Horseman #20 Apr 1955 ★★★

Writer: Uncredited
Pencils: Ogden Whitney, Harry Lazarus
Inks: Whitney, Lazarus
Cover: Whitney

Untitled Hooded Horseman story • 8 pp.

The Hooded Horseman defeats a giant Comanche villain, as Flash races to bring the cavalry to the rescue.

This tale, set in the Southwest of 1843, is a plot-driven epic typical of post-Code adventures, but there are also touches of anachronism.

Untitled Flash the Wonder Dog story • 3 pp.

Untitled Cowboy Sahib story • 7 pp.

In a second consecutive story reminiscent of Blackhawk's adventures, Cowboy Sahib gets the better of the exotic princess Rani in India.

No CGC copies

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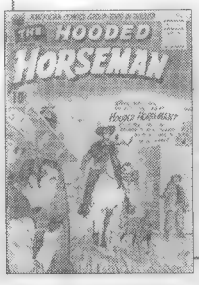
Hooded Horseman #21 Jan 1955 ★★★

Writer: Uncredited
Pencils: Ogden Whitney, Harry Lazarus
Inks: Whitney, Lazarus
Cover: Whitney

Untitled Hooded Horseman story • 8 pp.

The infamous gunfighter Jigger Johnson impersonates The Hooded Horseman and has everyone fooled until Flash helps save the day.



This familiar plot probably confused the vast majority of young readers, but it's still better than the violence of the earlier issues. The quasi-3-D cover is especially effective.

Untitled Flash, the Hooded Horseman's Miracle Dog story • 3 pp.

Untitled Johnny Injun story • 6 pp.

Untitled Cowboy Sahib story • 8 pp.

No CGC copies

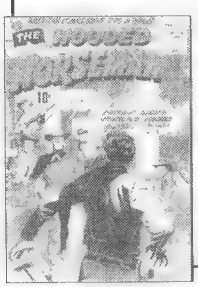
Then 10¢ NOW $20

Hooded Horseman #22 Sep 1955 ★★★

Writer: Uncredited
Pencils: Ogden Whitney
Inks: Whitney
Cover: Whitney

Untitled Hooded Horseman story • 8 pp.

In a tale set in 1880 in old California — 37 years after The Hooded Horseman's adventure in #20 — the masked hero prevents a plot to steal a mine.



There wasn't much editorial care with regard to the final adventure of The Hooded Horseman — or was that really his son?

Untitled Cowboy Sahib story • 8 pp.

Cowboy Sahib meets an interesting new "filly," but we'll never know what happened to this potential romance. This original character was never seen in comics again.

No CGC copies

Then 10¢ NOW $20

Hooded Horseman hoodoo

For some reason, quirky little ACG has been more popular with a number of collectors than might be expected. *The Hooded Horseman* was one of the most confusing titles to come out of the 1950s with regard to its strange numbering system. It took many years to solve the mystery, which became one of the most significant errors in the late 1980s in the *Gerber Photo-Journal*. The first series of *The Hooded Horseman* (#21-27) was followed by a second series in 1954-55 (#18-22), creating two #21 and #22 issues. That second series was spun from the horror title *Out of the Night* #17. *The Photo-Journal* ran pictures of all seven issues of the first series of *The Hooded Horseman* and also #18-20 of the second series. But the book also listed a second version of #23-27 dated 1955 and 1956 — and awarded these books scarcity ratings of "6"! That's why the scarcity ratings in the *Photo-Journal* have to be taken with a grain of salt, since it's tough to accept ratings of five non-existent issues — especially when those ratings indicated those issues were scarce, but not rare.

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Timothy Truman

10 FAVORITE COMIC BOOK COVERS

Scouting out favorite covers

Longtime artist Timothy Truman told ***CBG*** that picking his 10 favorite comics covers was "one tough job, y'all. The list of covers that I truly love would probably fill half this magazine and wouldn't include just U.S. comics. However, after much agonizing, I've pared my choices down to these 10."

As he completed his list, Truman shared one additional anecdote about his final choice, *Sword of Sorcery* #1, "After I became a comics pro, I saw the original art for this for sale at one of my first comics cons in Chicago for about $350! I didn't have the money. Arghh! I should have waited for some businessman in the parking garage and mugged him."

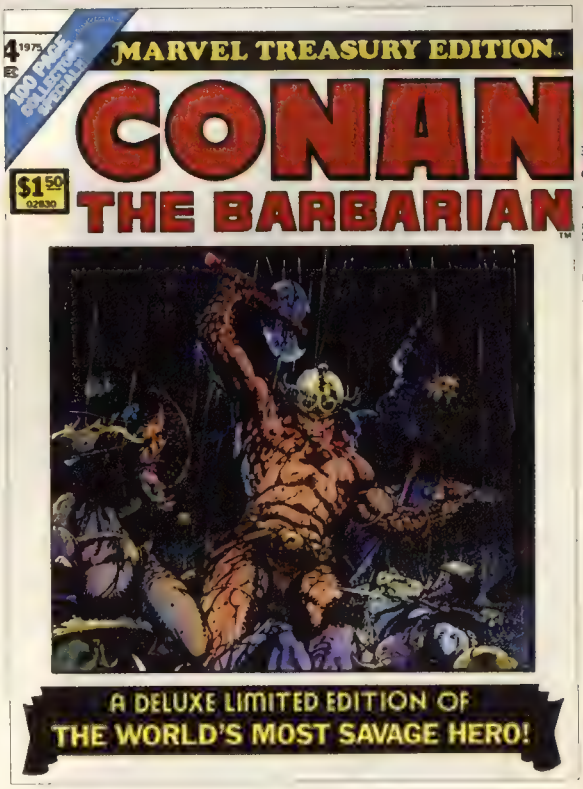
Truman is best known for his work on such titles as *Grimjack; Hawkworld; Grateful Dead Comix; The Prowler; Airboy; Scout; Turok, Dinosaur Hunter*; various *Jonah Hex* mini-series for DC's Vertigo imprint, and, most recently, an issue of *Conan* for Dark Horse.

Examples of Truman's work and information on his current and upcoming projects, appears at *www.timothytruman.com*.

Doctor Strange #177 © 1969 Marvel; art by Gene Colan

***Doctor Strange* #177 (Feb 69)** *"One of American comics' great 'poster shots.' It proves the impact of a simple, direct composition. There's no way one could see this cover on a spinner rack and not be riveted by it."*

Orig. price: 12¢ Current NM price: $27



Marvel Treasury Edition #4 © 1975 Marvel and Conan Properties; art by Barry Windsor-Smith

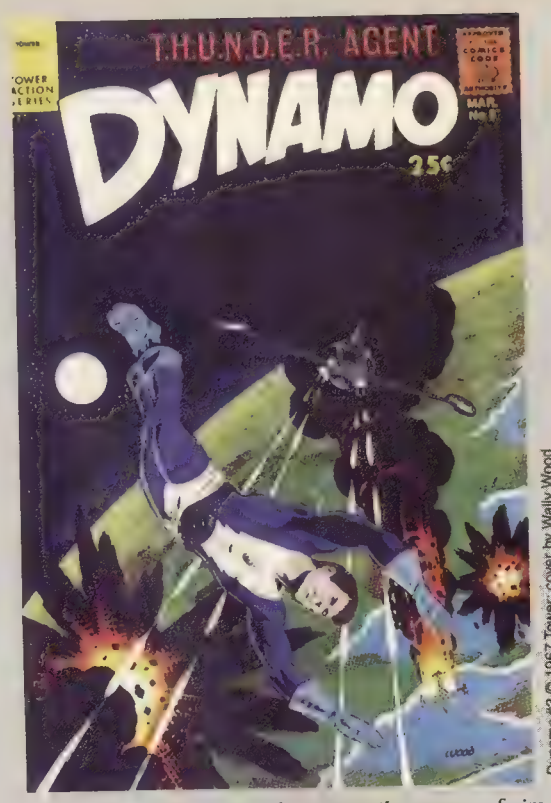
***Marvel Treasury Edition* #4 (1975)** *"You knew there had to be a Conan cover or two in this batch, right? This cover had a monumental impact on me when I saw it."*

Orig. price: $1.50 Current NM price: $10

Savage Sword of Conan #2 © 1974 Marvel and Conan Properties; cover by Neal Adams

***Savage Sword of Conan* #2 (Oct 74)** *"For me, Neal Adams was the only comics artist who could tap the same full-blooded vein that Frank Frazetta tapped into for the Lancer Conan paperback covers."*

Orig. price: $1 Current NM price: $28



Dynamo #3 © 1967 Tower; cover by Wally Wood

***Dynamo* #3 (Mar 67)** *"Again, the power of simplicity revealed. Plus brushwork and lighting to die for. All this, and the best template this side of Russ Heath for the fine art of drawing explosions."*

Orig. price: 25¢ Current NM price: $25

Showcase #76 © 1968 DC; art by Nick Cardy

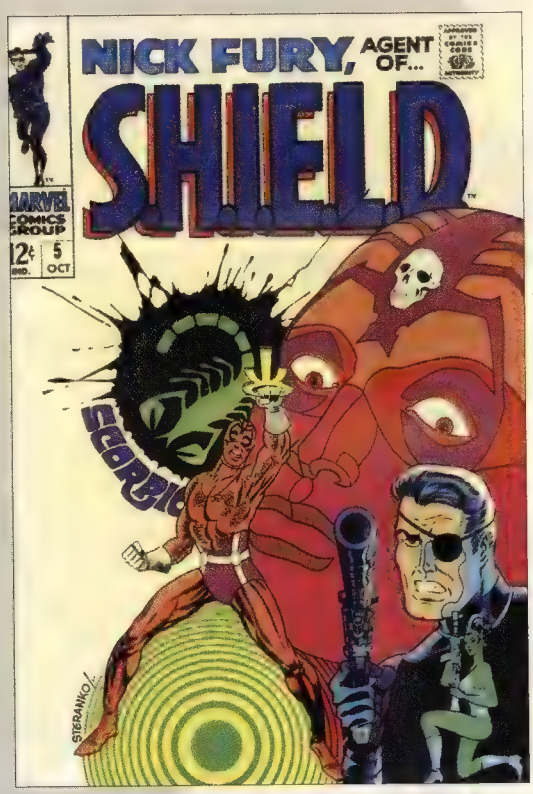
***Showcase* #76 (Aug 68)** *"Bat Lash by Nick Cardy. How non-'60s is this '60s comics cover? It's really astounding when you think about it. This cover has more storytelling in it than most covers done before or since."*

Orig. price: 12¢ Current NM price: $45

Thor #159 © 1968 Marvel; art by Jack Kirby

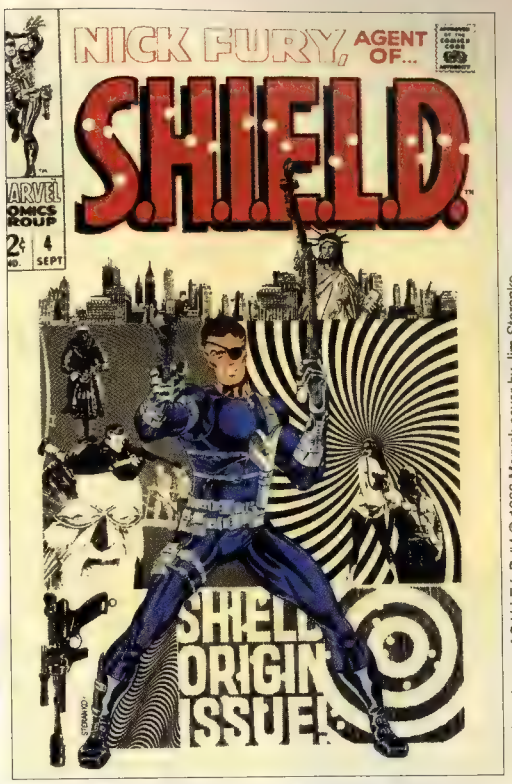
***Thor* #159 (Dec 68)** *"Thor vs. a frost giant. Now we're talkin'. This period of* **Thor** *kicked uru. The stories were pure swords and sorcery and/or science fiction."*

Orig. price: 12¢ Current NM price: $32



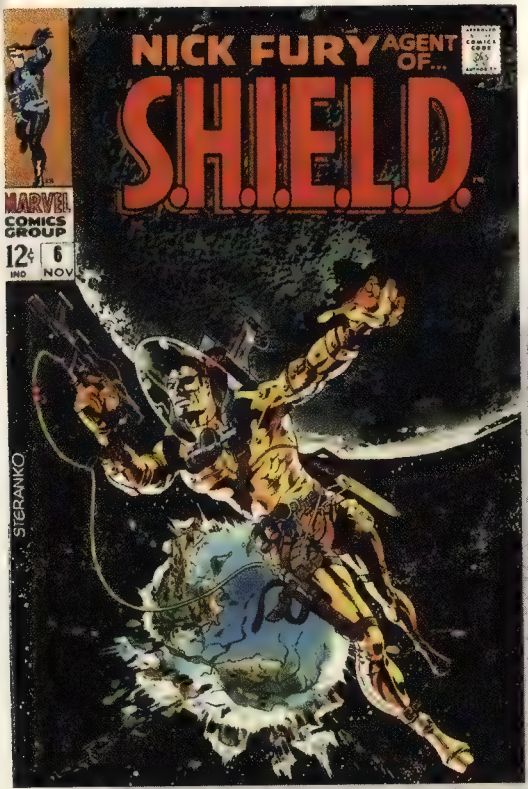
Nick Fury, Agent of S.H.I.E.L.D. #5 © 1968 Marvel; cover by Jim Steranko

Nick Fury, Agent of S.H.I.E.L.D.* #5 (Oct 68)** *"Who from my generation can't remember the first time they saw Jim Steranko's* ***Nick Fury *comics? This cover was another one that I would copy over and over when I was learning how to draw."*
Orig. price: 12¢ Current NM price: $35



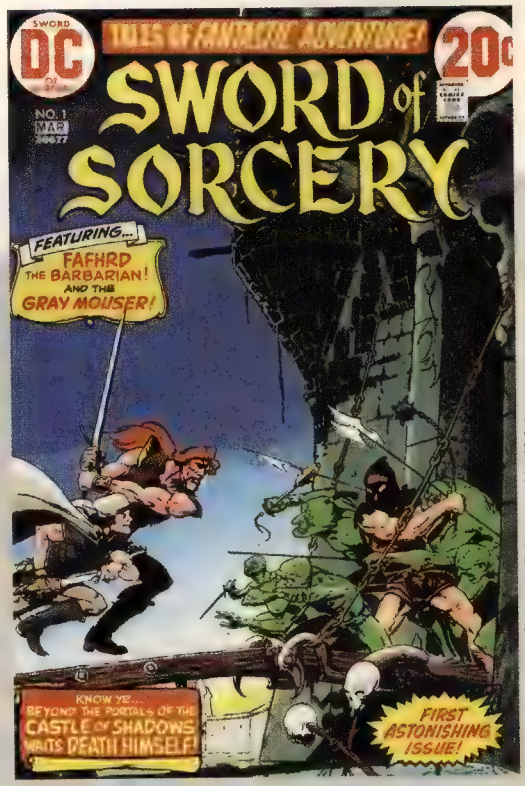
Nick Fury, Agent of S.H.I.E.L.D. #4 © 1968 Marvel; cover by Jim Steranko

***Nick Fury, Agent of S.H.I.E.L.D.* #4 (Sep 68)** *"Another great example of Steranko's penchant for imagination, innovation, and composition. OK, kid in the 1960s: Cruise the racks, see this cover, and try to take your eyes off it. Just try."* **Orig. price: 12¢ Current NM price: $38**



Nick Fury, Agent of S.H.I.E.L.D. #6 © 1968 Marvel; art by Jim Steranko

***Nick Fury, Agent of S.H.I.E.L.D.* #6 (Nov 68)** *"Three Steranko covers? Yes, three Steranko covers. I'm realizing just what a huge influence on my thinking this guy had."*
Orig. price: 12¢ Current NM price: $27



Swords of Sorcery #1 © 1973 DC; art by Mike Kaluta

***Sword of Sorcery* #1 (Mar 73)** *"This just might be my favorite cover of all time. I even took this book to church with me and would look at the cover while my dad was preaching."*
Orig. price: 20¢ Current NM price: $10

HEROCLIX MARKET REPORT

by TERRENCE MILTNER

Fix my 'Clix — Cap's crazy quartet

In the tradition of MTV's *Pimp My Ride* and The Learning Channel's *Overhaulin'*, we're going to take a broken-down, worthless army with a framework that has major sentimental value and fix it up.

Many comic-book fans think Captain America was a founding member of The Avengers, but he didn't join the team until the fourth issue. Soon after, Captain America rebuilt the team with Hawkeye, Quicksilver, and The Scarlet Witch: three heroes the world thought were criminals. They carried on admirably for a year and set the precedent of The Avengers' rotating membership.

So let's look at the wreck that was Cap's team in the early days of *HeroClix*. The earliest tournaments were fought with 200-point teams. And this one couldn't do much. **Captain America's** first click of Charge makes sense, as does a click of Leadership, but, unfortunately, he loses the movement ability on the second click and keeps Leadership for over half the dial. His combat stats start OK but drop way too fast.

A former circus archer and rogue, **Hawkeye** is the finest archer in the Marvel universe, but his first *HeroClix* version left a lot of people cold. Early clicks of Running Shot were good, but starting with a damage of one meant that, if he used Running Shot or targeted two opponents, he could only do one click of damage. His mediocre combat values dropped just as fast as Cap's.

Quicksilver is one of the fastest people in the Marvel universe. And, in the first expansion of *HeroClix*, he had the highest speed value. Energy Shield Deflection made him hard to hit from range, but he had to get in close to attack, nullifying his defense. Flurry wasn't much of a danger with an average attack and only two damage.

Scarlet Witch was one of the most desirable figures in the game for her Probability Control. But most players opted for the Rookie version. The veteran just cost too much more for a longer dial and barely improved combat values.

Their Avengers team ability wasn't even very helpful. Free movement just meant that there was a temptation to push figures that couldn't afford to lose a click.

As the game matured, the standard tournament format grew to 300 points, and there are now playable versions of all four characters. **Captain America** still starts with Charge and Leadership, but he keeps Charge longer and it leads to Leap/Climb. Leadership gives way to Exploit Weakness, an ability not available in Infinity Challenge. Late-dial Outwit is a lot more useful on a figure that has done damage to opposing figures. The new figure even starts with Impervious, representing his indestructible shield, which gives way to Toughness.

Hawkeye is now the ranged threat he should be with a range of 10 and an 11 attack. As a transporter-based figure with Running Shot, **Hawkeye** has a huge effective range. If he picks a single target, three damage with Ranged Combat Expert is going to let the target know they've been hit. **Hawkeye** remains a threat in the late dial with Running Shot and Incapacitate with three targets.

It's hard to tell who was more improved by the *Armor Wars* expansion, **Captain America** or **Quicksilver**. Hypersonic Speed was introduced in *DC HeroClix Hypertime*. The ability to move, attack, and move should have been **Quicksilver's** — and now he has it. Early Super Senses allows him to dodge more attacks than Energy Shield Deflection, and he gets that late in the dial, as well.

Stealth will keep **Scarlet Witch** safer than just her Probability Control and long range. The Ultimate X-Men team ability lets her pick a target she has a good chance of hitting, and make it better.

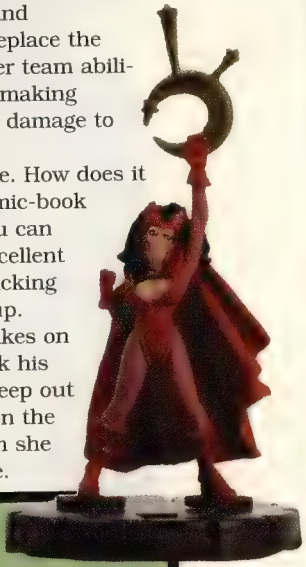
There were no Feat Cards in the early days of HeroClix. Now, with 15 points remaining, add the "Thunderbolts" feat to **Captain America, Hawkeye**, and **Quicksilver**. This allows you to replace the Avengers team ability with another team ability. "Mystics" is a popular choice, making attackers take damage, if they do damage to your team.

So now we have this sweet ride. How does it handle? This team mimics its comic-book counterparts about as well as you can expect it to. **Quicksilver** is an excellent harasser: striking and moving, picking his battles, and not getting tied up. **Captain America** dives in and takes on the big hitters. **Hawkeye** can pick his targets and has the mobility to keep out of trouble. **Scarlet Witch** stays on the perimeter, helps teammates when she can, and takes shots as available.

Old and Busted

194 points

1x Captain America (IC #69, 62 pts)
1x Hawkeye (CT #53, 64 pts)
1x Quicksilver (IC #108, 28 pts)
1x Scarlet Witch (IC #105, 40 pts)



New Hotness

300 points

1x Captain America (AW #80, 90 pts)
1x Hawkeye (FF #12, 84 pts)
1x Quicksilver (AW #53, 62 pts)
1x Scarlet Witch (FF #53, 49 pts)
3x "Thunderbolts" (FF #F8, 15 pts)

They might be giants — the first *HeroClix* Collector's Set

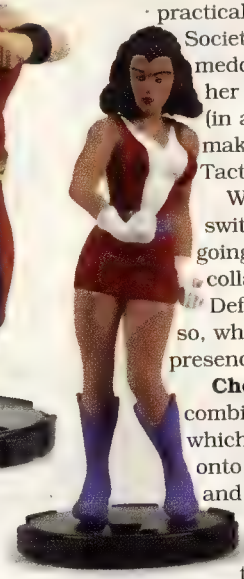
The *HeroClix* Collector's Club kicked off this year, and, beginning with the action-packed *Collateral Damage* expansion, membership is as simple as buying a *HeroClix* "brick" at your Friendly Local Game Store and sending in your receipt and UPC codes for the free brick exclusive.

One of the main perks of joining the club is the opportunity to purchase Collector's Sets before the public at discounted member prices. The first Collector's Set features seven of the largest (literally) personalities in the DC universe — the DC Giants.

Headlining the collection is **Atom Smasher**, and, after raiding WWE dressing rooms, the fan favorite is definitely ready to rock. Armed with the stereotypical brute strength and durability that make most behemoths formidable, his Flurry plus a surge in attack numbers on his last two clicks ensure that he'll go down swinging. Even better, his high defense can protect adjacent Justice Society allies, making them harder to hit as an added bonus.

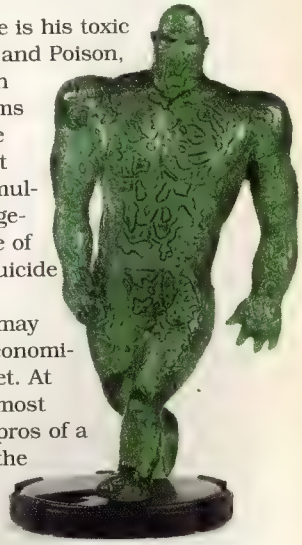
Forged from the remnants of The Metal Men, **Alloy** comes directly from the pages of the Elseworlds series Kingdom Come. When he's not stomping enemies with Super Strength, Flurry, or Blades, he can back up his teammates with such unconventional abilities as Barrier and late-dial Perplex.

Positioning the bikini-clad **Giganta** on the map is a distraction in itself, but her figure holds more secrets than meets the eye. Being aligned with The Injustice League was practically an insult before, but now, with The Society, she can immunize herself against that meddlesome Outwit half of the time. Likewise, her abundant supply of Perplex and Outwit (in association with her height advantage) makes her a solid candidate for Brilliant Tactician.



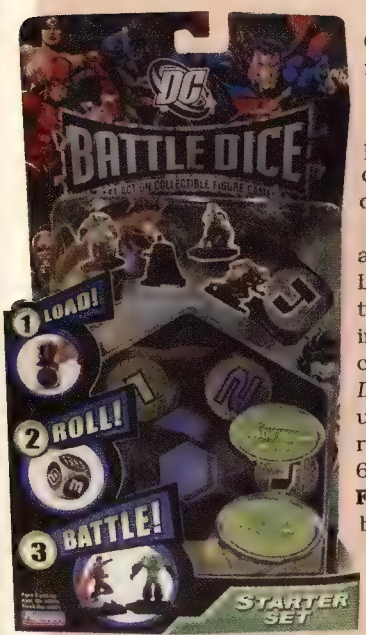
While **Validus** is a melee monster who switches gears to Psychic Blast when the going gets rough, **Colossal Boy** tends to take a collaborative role, contributing Perplex and Defend to his team. Both are also wildcards, so, when surrounded with the right allies, their presence is invaluable.

Chemo's claim to fame is his toxic combination of Plasticity and Poison, which allows him to latch onto unsuspecting victims and suck their life force dry. If that weren't bad enough, his multiple clicks of damage-reducing super-powers, double dose of Regenerate, and kinship with the Suicide Squad all strengthen his longevity.



Lastly, Doom Patrol's **Rita Farr** may be the runt of the group, but her economical cost is actually her greatest asset. At only 76 points, she's currently the most cost-effective way of adding all the pros of a giant to a force, and towering over the cityscape with her bird's-eye view amplifies her effectiveness as an Outsider. — ***Tom Landy***

DC Comics Battle Dice expansion announced



Playmates Toys has announced that a line of *DC Comics Battle Dice* products will hit shelves this fall. The initial set will feature more than 65 DC characters, including Superman, Batman, Green Lantern, The Joker, and Wonder Woman. As with *Marvel Heroes Battle Dice*, players build an army of super-heroes or villains and compete for the title of *Battle Dice* champion. As is the case with *Marvel Heroes Battle Dice*,

DC Comics Battle Dice will be available in both starter and booster packs and will be supported with Dice Launchers. Each starter pack includes six dice, six figures, two play mats, a reference card, a carrying case, and an instruction booklet that includes a character breakdown of each army, in addition to a comic book with storylines featuring the characters playing *Battle Dice*. *DC Comics Battle Dice* starters will include **Batman, Lex Luthor, The Flash, Beast Boy**, and two random figures. Four series of booster packs will be launched throughout the year following the initial release. The first booster series, released at the same time as the starter pack, will include 60 randomly chosen figures, including **Robin, Catwoman, Kryptonite Man, The Penguin, Firestorm**, and **Chronos**, with varying degrees of rarity. Subsequent booster packs will bring the total count to more than 190 characters after the first year. A chart is included with each booster pack to allow players to identify figures in the series and the rarity of each figure.

Each booster pack also includes a collectible Battle Die. Finally, Playmates Toys will release two Dice Launchers: **Shazam!** and **Green Lantern**, each of which consists of a 5-inch tall diorama of the character with a mechanical feature capable of throwing one Battle Die at a time. Each of the launchers comes with its own exclusive game figurine and Battle Die. (*www.playmatestoys.com*) — ***James Mishler***

COLLECTIBLE CARD GAME MARKET REPORT

by GEOFFREY SNIDER

Lots to love in Justice League of America!

While digging through boxes of the *DC TCG: Justice League of America* expansion, you'll like just about everything you see. There's a ton of eye-catching stuff in there: fun mechanics, fluffy story background, and all the other top-notch features we've come to expect. I opened my boxes of *JLA* and went to work figuring out how I wanted to play with this wonderful new bunch of toys. My only (self-imposed) rule for this "playtime" was: *JLA* cards only!

Of the four teams available in *JLA*, I started with Justice League International. While searching for the main JLI theme and reading their entire complement of cards, I came across several that piqued my interest: cards requiring you to have four or fewer resources in play to utilize their abilities. **Black Canary** has an unprecedented 12 ATK for a five-cost character, while **Bwa Ha Ha Ha Ha!** has the ability to protect characters from an opponent's nasty tricks. **Plasma Blast** and **Batman** provide an additional punch with fewer resources, and **Kooey Kooey Kooey** allows the sacrifice of a resource to get any card you want.

So how do these advantages fit together to make a coherent strategy? Simple: Most of them involve improving your offensive capabilities. Others allow you to keep those capabilities safe and secure, and still others make those capabilities more accessible. In other words, choose all the offensive stuff you can get your hands on; then make sure it will always function. Since keeping yourself at four or fewer resources is how you make sure it all works, just include cards like **L-Ron** and **Kooey Kooey Kooey**.

A typical game with this deck will see a small swarm of characters on your side for the first couple of turns. Then, such larger characters as **Ice**, **Batman**, and **Black Canary** will show up to finish off your opponent. If your game goes beyond the sixth turn, you're going to have to rely on your large and small characters working together, team-attacking your opponent down to zero endurance with **Safety in Numbers**.

Slightly under the curve
(JLI; all cards from the JLA expansion)
4x Sue Dibny, Charismatic Coordinator
4x Ted Kord — Blue Beetle, Heir of the Scarab
2x Catherine Cobert, Embassy Chief
2x Oberon, Micro Manager
4x L-Ron, Robot Companion
4x Booster Gold, Michael Jon Carter
1x Bluejay, Jay Abrams
2x Silver Sorceress, Laura Cynthia Neilsen
3x Joseph Jones — General Glory, Lady Liberty's Champion
1x Batman, Hidden Crusader
4x Ice, Tora Olafsdotter
1x Dinah Laurel Lance — Black Canary, Blonde Bombshell
4x Plasma Blast
3x Safety in Numbers
1x Running Interference
3x Bwa Ha Ha Ha Ha!
4x Trial by Fire
2x Magnificent Seven
3x Glass Jaw
4x Kooey Kooey Kooey
2x The Castle
1x Nth Metal
1x High-Tech Flare Gun

Next was the Injustice Gang. This faction deals with army characters (any number of army characters can be included in a deck) and their support cards. Building army decks is different from building "normal" Vs. System decks. Normal decks play a single character each turn or are fueled by a powerful mechanic — Sentinels play one character each turn, each with a powerful ability, while Teen Titans rely on readying exhausted characters. This is a true army deck, relying on a horde of one-cost characters to win. However, you'll notice that, by themselves, hordes can't win. They don't have the attack and defense values necessary to defeat all your opponent's characters. The two advantages to one-cost army characters are their reliability (you're guaranteed to draw them when you need them) and their numbers (as long as you keep drawing cards, you'll be able to play as many of them as you have resources). So how do you maximize the effects of these advantages?

First, make sure you can draw more cards. Second, make sure you include enough cards that count the number of characters you have in play, because you'll have lots! The Injustice Gang does army a bit differently from most of the older affiliations in Vs. It uses cards like **Zazzala**, **Shadow-Thief**, and **Tattooed Man** to mix a normal deck with an army deck — your one-cost guys get some robust companions. It also helps that there's card-drawing available with **Gang-Up** and **Criminal Mastermind**.

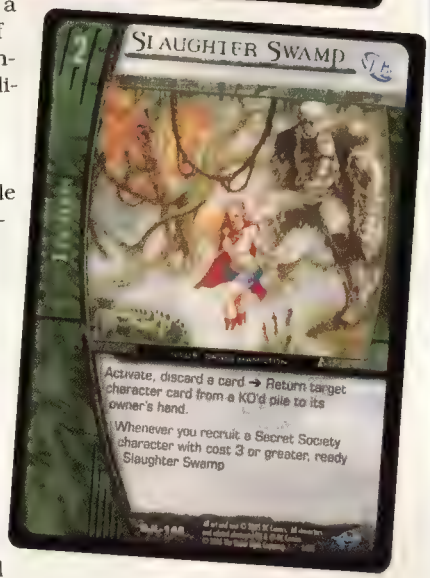
Infestation is an awesome attack-booster for an army deck. **Hard-Light Storage Tank** puts even more characters into play. And **Royal Egg Matrix** retrieves characters from the KO'd pile. The deck almost builds itself.

A good game will look like this: Turn 1, play **Infernal Minions**; Turn 2, play **Zazzala** and put **Infernal Minions** into play; Turn 3, play **Shadow-Thief** and put **Infernal Minions** into play; Turn 4,

play four **Infernal Minions**; Turn 5, play **Tattooed Man**, put two **Infernal Minions** into play. By turn 5 you will probably have played upwards of 12 characters!

Reading through the Secret Society cards, I discovered that they are the second faction in Vs. that deals with putting cards in the KO'd pile as well as retrieving them (Underworld being the first). I immediately locked onto these zone-based mechanics (a zone is any place in the game where a card can exist, including your deck, discard pile, hand, removed from game pile, *etc.*) for a deck-building focus. Also, quite a few Secret Society cards add or remove +1 ATK/+1 DEF tokens. Not only can the bonuses be useful for causing and preventing damage, they can also be used by certain cards to fuel activated abilities.

Whenever I'm building a deck around a specific set of mechanics, I spend a lot of time thinking of how using those mechanics translates specifically into a win condition for the game. In the case of Secret Society, the +1/+1 tokens can easily be seen as additional endurance loss. It's more difficult to envision how discard-pile manipulation translates, since its advantages are more abstract. The advantages Secret Society gains from messing with the discard pile are twofold. First, there are cards like **Gorilla City** and **Psycho Pirate** that give you more attack. Second, there are cards like **Straight to the Grave** and **Slaughter Swamp** that allow you to play the characters you want at precisely the right time.

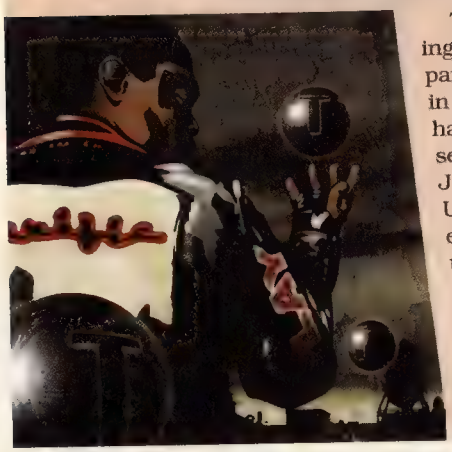


Since I figured out how I wanted to use Secret Society, I just had to build my deck accordingly. I decided that my token-based cards were going to be used for two things: to provide attack and defense bonuses for various characters — and for the special ability on **Captain Cold** (and maybe even **Captain Boomerang**), when the opportunity arose. Next, since I had the capability to search my deck with **Mysterious Benefactor**, I included at least one copy of each Secret Society leader. My other search option was **Straight to the Grave** in combination with **Slaughter Swamp**, allowing me to get any character I wanted. Working together, these elements turned into a token-manufacturing engine that could pack a serious mid- to late-game punch.

Infernal Army of Injustice
(Injustice Gang; all cards from JLA)
1x Captain Boomerang, Dagger
22x Infernal Minions, Army
4x Zazzala — Queen Bee, Royal Genetrix
4x Shadow-Thief, Carl Sands
3x Tattooed Man, Living Ink
4x Gang-Up
4x Secret Files
4x All Too Easy
4x Criminal Mastermind
4x Infestation
4x Hard-Light Storage Tank
2x Royal Egg Matrix

Top Secret Tokens
(Secret Society; all cards from JLA)
4x Copperhead, Slithering Assassin
4x Manhunter Clone, Clone of Paul Kirk
4x Funky Flashman, Salesman Supreme
2x James Jesse — Trickster, Giovanni Giuseppe
2x Captain Boomerang, Dagger
3x Deadshot, Floyd Lawton
1x The Wizard, William Zard
1x Dr. Sivana, Thaddeus Bodog Sivana
4x Captain Cold, Leonard Snart
1x Henry King — Brainwave, Sinister Psionic
1x Lex Luthor, Criminal Genius
1x Sinestro, Corrupted by the Ring
1x Scarecrow, Fearmonger
1x Darkseid, Heart of Darkness
1x Ultra-Humanite, Evolutionary Antecedent
1x Psycho Pirate, Roger Hayden
4x Gorilla City
4x Slaughter Swamp
4x Sinister Citadel
4x Attend or Die!
4x Straight to the Grave
4x Mysterious Benefactor
4x Counterstrike

Infinite Crisis strikes the *DC TCG* universe!



The Infinite Crisis that has been sweeping the DC comics universe will strike the parallel world of the *DC Trading Card Game* in May — nobody is safe, and anything can happen! With the *Infinite Crisis* expansion set, players can take on the part of the Justice Society of America, Villains United, the Secret Six, Shadowpact, or even Checkmate in the quest to control the destiny of worlds during the Infinite Crisis and beyond. *Infinite Crisis* brings new magical and technological abilities to the mix of powers already available in the game. *Infinite Crisis* is a 110-card expansion that will be released in 14-card booster packs.

COMICS MARKET REPORT

Industry indicators for FEBRUARY 2006

BACK ISSUE MARKET

CGC (Comics Guaranty LLC) had graded
700,604 comic books
as of its **February 2** population report.

At any given time, eBay offered
95,000 auctions
in its comic-book category.

NEW COMIC-BOOK MARKET

Counting just its Top 300 **comic book titles**, Diamond Comic Distributors sold to comics shops approximately...
6.05 million copies
...**up 3%** from the same month last year.

If all sold, those copies were worth, at full retail, approximately...
$18.18 million
...**up 8%** from the same month last year.

Comics shop final orders for the Top 100 **new trade paperbacks** sold by Diamond were worth approximately...
$3.45 million

Combined, those products equal...
$21.63 million
...**up 5%** from the same month last year.

The total of **all comic books, trade paperbacks, and magazines** retailers bought from Diamond was approximately...
$28.64 million
...**up 5%** from the same month last year.

The **average price** of the typical comic book ordered by retailers was...
$3.25
...**up 14¢** from the same month last year.

SLABBED COMICS SALES

Throughout the price guide are a variety of arrows next to slabbed comics prices. Here's what they indicate:

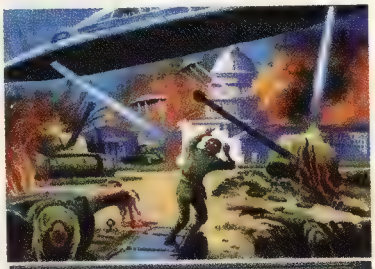
▲ Slabbed comic has **increased three months in a row** in average value = 11
◮ Slabbed comic has **increased two months in a row** in average value = 16
△ Slabbed comic has **increased since last month** in average value = 246
▽ Slabbed comic has **decreased since last month** in average value = 416

Golden Age collection highlights Robert Edward Auctions April sale

Best-known for its baseball memorabilia auctions, Robert Edward Auctions has announced that its upcoming April 29 auction will feature thousands of collectibles from various pop culture areas, including comics, non-sports trading cards, and music.

Among the sale's comics highlights is a single lot of 390 Golden Age comics offered as "The Ambler Collection." The group, consigned by its original owner, includes *Human Torch* #2 (#1), CGC-graded VG+ (4.5).

Original art, including a Jose Gonzalez pin-up of Vampirella from 1981 (left), with a pre-auction estimate of $2,000 to $4,000 and a reserve of $1,000; the original cover art for *Vampirella* #44 by Sanjulian (estimated at $8,000 to $12,000 with a $4,000 reserve); and Sanjulian's original cover for *Creepy* #46 (estimated at $4,000 to $6,000, with a $2,000 reserve) will also be offered in the sale.



Non-sports card original art, including three previously unoffered original pieces from Topps' 1962 *Mars Attacks* set (right) and originals from the 1966 *Batman* and 1962 *Civil War News* sets, have also been consigned to the sale.

Other non-sports trading-card memorabilia in the sale includes the highest-graded complete set of the 1940 Superman Gum Inc. cards.

Among the music-related lots are examples of the earliest-known Bob Dylan handwritten poems, a 1955 Elvis Presley concert poster, and the complete wardrobe worn by Madonna in 1985's "Material Girl" video.

Robert Edward Auctions President Robert Lifson said he expects total sales for the auction to exceed $5 million.

Bidding in the sale begins April 10 with bids accepted by phone, fax, or over Internet at the auction house's website, *www.RobertEdwardAuctions.com*. The April 29 sale will also be hosted on eBay Live. A 500-page color catalog is available free to interested bidders. To request a catalog or register to bid in the sale, visit the firm's website, contact Robert Edward Auctions, P.O. Box 7256, Watchung, NJ 07069, or call (908) 226-9900.

Brent Frankenhoff can be reached at ***megaguide@krause.com.*** *CGC sales data is provided by Darryl Buchanan, who can be reached at* ***dbuchanan@thecomicsheet.com.***

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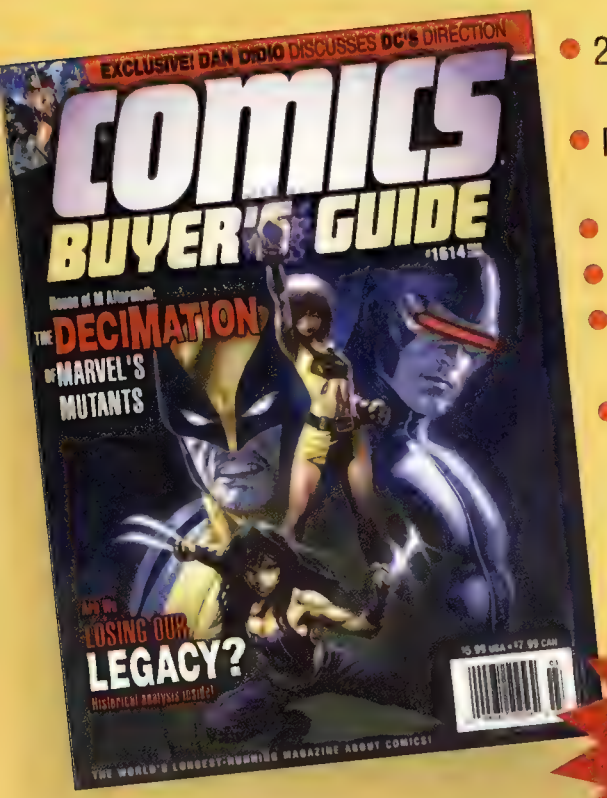

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An insider's look at the New York Comic-Con

NEW YORK COMIC-CON

New con on the block

by MARC PATTEN

There's a new kid in town, and he's scrappy and tough as can be. Sure, he's not perfect; he makes mistakes; his eyes are bigger than his stomach; and he's upset more than his share of the ladies; but, hey, he's only human. Besides, a few more years of experience under his belt, and he's got leading man written all over him. People keep calling him Comic-Con, but he isn't from San Diego, and he prefers to go by his full name: New York Comic-Con.

As most of you know, I have a great love for fan conventions, especially ones that that have the word "comic" in them. I attended my first local convention when I was about 10 and I don't know if it was the boxes and boxes of old comics I had never seen before or the displays of pop-culture toys and memorabilia that amazed my young mind. Today, I'd like to think my fondness for conventions is the camaraderie of sharing a favorite pastime with others of the same ilk. At any rate, I love going to cons: large, small, and anywhere in between. And this new kid on the block, New York? Well, let's say he about tripled my expectations.

Reed Exhibitions launched the inaugural New York Comic-Con on Feb. 24-26 in cold, windy Manhattan at the Jacob Javits Convention Center. From programming to exhibitors to guests, organizers put on a modern miracle. Despite the negative criticism you may or may not have heard about the show, these guys knocked it out of the park.

For many of you who attended the show or who read about the widely publicized overcrowding problems Saturday of the show, I feel your pain. For those who have no idea what I'm talking about, I'll explain.

The convention was to run from Friday to Sunday. Friday was a trade-only day, when in the morning there was a retailer presentation by Diamond and DC and from noon until 4 p.m., the exhibit hall was only open to profes-

Dozen to dig for

The Zombies still won't give up their place as king of the hill, but there's a new Sith Lord with a chip on his shoulder that may give them a run for their money. (Wow, wouldn't it be cool to see Vader hacking up Jedi Zombies? Hey, Dark Horse …) DC's *Infinite Crisis* titles are still the big fan favorite. Look for heat on the first printings of all its "One Year Later" titles to pick up steam, as *Crisis* concludes.

1. *Marvel Zombies* #1. This crazy story by Robert Kirkman, featuring zombified Marvel doppelgängers, has hit the stratosphere, and fans want to know what the future holds for these pseudo-heroes. Dec 05. Cover: $2.99 Current price: $35, 2nd print Spidey variant $7

2. *Star Wars: Purge* #1. This one-shot picks up right after *Revenge of the Sith*, and Darth Vader does more than his fair share of evil. Severely under-ordered by retailers, it sold out fast, and fans are searching high and low for a copy. Dec 05. Cover: $2.99 Current price: $25

3. *Batman Annual* #25. We warned you that this story was hot, and this issue (where all is revealed about Jason Todd's return) sold out faster than Superboy–Prime can lose his temper — even with a $4.99 cover price. A second printing is on the way, but the original is the one to hunt for. May 06. Cover: $4.99 Current price: $12

4. *Amazing Spider-Man* #529. Like it or hate it, Spidey's new armor — err — costume is creating waves all over. Feb 06. Cover: $2.99 Current price: $8

5. *Infinite Crisis Secret Files* #1. It's the story everyone was curious about: Just what happened to the Earth-2 Superman and Lois and what made Superboy-Prime a bonafide loony tune manipulated by Alex Luthor? Marv Wolfman proves he still has the chops in this sold-out issue. May 06. Cover: $5.99 Current price: $10

6. *X-Men: Deadly Genesis* #1. Who is the third Summers brother? Why is Prof. X missing, and what secrets is he hiding? Read this and let the mystery begin! Nov 05. Cover: $2.99

sionals. The floor had tremendous traffic flow made up of approximately 4,000 registered librarians, comics retailers, bookstore retailers, publishers, industry consultants, and media: lots and lots of media. That attendance number is multiples of the now-defunct industry trade show formerly held in conjunction with Comic-Con International: San Diego.

The day before had been a graphic-novel conference that was also well attended. On Friday, the show was first opened to the public from 4 p.m. to 8 p.m., and business was brisk for us and for most exhibitors we talked to. In fact, it was *so* busy I started to worry.

Heroes in Action set up a larger display of merchandise than our normal set-up at the six major conventions we do annually within a 10x15-foot booth. However, I had had low expectations for this convention. At best, I figured, the show would get about 15,000 people — roughly the size of Wizard World Philadelphia. At best. I figured, the other convention in town (the Big Apple Comic Con) gets about 7,000 at its annual three-day November show, so how was Reed going to more than double that attendance? Wasn't gonna happen.

With these low expectations in mind, I hadn't hired additional help. After all, I've done Wizard World Chicago with just one helper and me, and I was fine. But Friday night was fairly busy, and suddenly, near the end of the night, the buzz on the show increased around the room. What if they got more than 10,000 people? Some retailers were guessing they'd get 20,000 for the weekend, and I laughed in their faces. Nevertheless, I started to worry more.

Early Saturday morning, the retailer across from me asked if I had any extra badges for the wife of one of his employees and her friend. I kidded with the girls that, in exchange, they could work for me for the weekend — and their eyes lit up and they said, "Sure!" I was saved. (And, yes, I paid them and bought them lunch each day. I'm not a cheapskate, you know.) If it hadn't been for Mary and Diana, I would have been in big trouble. I can't thank them enough. They were sweet, trustworthy hard workers. I couldn't have asked for better luck or better people to help me.

Saturday was packed. I'm talking Comic-Con International: San Diego on a Saturday packed. The aisles had a constant flow of traf-

Saturday was packed. I'm talking Comic-Con International: San Diego on a Saturday packed.

Current prices: Silvestri cover $6, Quesada variant $14, Hairsine variant $7

7. *Infinite Crisis* #1-4 (tie). *IC* is like the Energizer Bunny: It just keeps going and going and going. Stores are selling out, and reorders of any printings aren't coming fast enough. So the inevitable happens, and back-issue prices are climbing, especially on first prints. Dec 05-Apr 06. Cover: $3.95 Current prices: #1-4 1st prints $6, RRP Sketch Cover #1 $450

8. *Incredible Hulk* #92. Ol' Greenskin is climbing out of the gutters once again, as he proves that, no matter what planet he's on, "Hulk is strongest one there is!" Feb 06. Cover: $2.99 Current price: $11

9. *Friendly Neighborhood Spider-Man* #1 / "The Other" Pts. 1-9 variant covers(tie). The variant covers for this storyline are the talk of the town, as every version of Spidey gets his due. Oct 05. Cover price: $2.99 Current prices: 1st print $10, "The Other" variants — Pts. 1-9 $6, *Marvel Knights Spider-Man* #22 variant $14, *Amazing Spider-Man* #528 (Spider-Ham Sketch Variant) $50

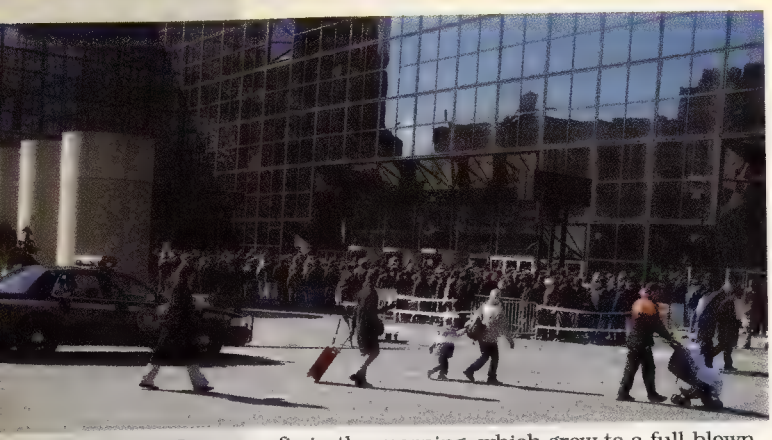
10. *Wolverine* #36. Paving the way for *Wolverine: Origins*, Daniel Way (pun intended) shows readers secrets about The X-Man they've only dreamed of knowing in this kick-off tale. Nov 05. Cover: $2.99 Current prices: $5, Quesada variant $12

11. *X-Factor* Vol. 2 #1. The freshest take on an X-book in years climbs up a few notches and firmly places Peter David on the hot list again. Jan 05. Cover: $2.99 Current prices: $7, 2nd print variant $4

12. *Ultimate Fantastic Four* #21-23 (tie). The first adventures of Marvel Zombies is making these books smoke with balls of fire. Aug 06-Oct 06.

Cover: $2.99 Current prices: #21 $6, #22 $16, #23 $7

Special Thanks to: Larry Doherty from Larry's Comics in Lowell, Mass., and Jon Newman from Ultimate Comics in Durham, N.C., for supplying key market info each month.



Fans who had come from far and wide and couldn't get in on Saturday were furious.

fic in the morning, which grew to a full-blown tidal wave by noon. Little did those of us manning booths inside know about the troubles fans were facing on the outside.

According to reports, state troopers had closed the exhibit hall to additional attendees, and ticket sales were halted for the rest of the weekend by show management, due to existing crowds and advance tickets already sold for Sunday.

Fans who had come from far and wide and couldn't get in on Saturday were furious. Some who had bought tickets in advance online but didn't arrive early on Saturday were denied access to the show. In short, Saturday was an overcrowded logistical and political nightmare — especially for a new show.

The halls had been designed to allow for crowds of up to 10,000 people. It was estimated that between 15,000 and 20,000 people showed up and got in. More than 5,000 people were turned away, and between 400 and 500 people who purchased advance tickets were turned away, with guarantees of refunds and Sunday entrée.

Planning and execution. The public outcry that weekend was heard around the globe. Comments online ranged from, "How could they not have anticipated the crowds for such a well-publicized event?" and, "Why couldn't they be better organized?" to, "They obviously don't have enough experience to handle events this large," and, "We need a *good* show in NYC, not this mess." People even complained that February was a bad month for a show in New York, because of the cold and potential for weather.

Fans who couldn't get in on Saturday just couldn't understand how Reed had let more people in than the show could physically hold. Most of the outcry came from frustration and ignorance of the facts. So let me be the voice of reason, as someone who was actually there and as someone who can offer a realistic amount of hard data.

Fact 1: Reed Exhibitions is perhaps the largest, most well-organized trade-show organizer in the country, and it runs all sorts of events at the Javits Center year-round. So, lack of experience? I don't think so. These are the folks who run Book Expo America, the book industry's bigger trade show, with more than 70,000 attendees. (And it's not even open to consumers, just the trade.)

Did Reed need a larger space at the Javits Center than it had? Absolutely. Could it have anticipated the crowds it got? No, it could not, and I'll explain.

In the planning stages of the convention, I was told months and months ago that they wanted a bigger space but couldn't get it. The Javits books up quickly, and, more often than not (despite the outrageous costs of putting on a show there), you take what you can get. Consumer shows aren't as popular to book with convention center managers as "trade only" shows, because business people spend lots of money on local restaurants, hotels, and entertainment — Joe Fanboy does not. The folks who run large convention centers want to get people from out of town to spend money in the local economy. It's good for political reasons and financial reasons — what mayor is going to approve expansion for a large center, if the local economy doesn't benefit?

Fact 2: During the summer, I was in talks with Reed management to consult for the show in several areas. Attendance projections by numerous comics industry people they talked to showed that the show would most likely bring in between 10,000 and 15,000 people *total* for the weekend. I agreed with that assessment, based on the history of conventions in New York.

So the space as it was *should* have been more than large enough for the attendance that was projected. Even if they got 10,000 people on Saturday alone, between fans going in and out of the presentations, panels, and signings, overcrowding should never have been an issue.

Again, I will say this loud and clear for all the naysayers out there: No one — I mean, *no one* — could have predicted that the on-site registration on Saturday would turn out to be as large as it was. And that seems to be where the problem rested. Despite rumors to the contrary, according to Reed, it only sold a total of 4,500 advance tickets for Saturday admission.

Now, my *guess* is that the problem stemmed from the fact that approximately 500 of these advance ticket holders came late: say, after 11 a.m., when the show opened. Yes, the lines to get in were mismanaged and there was a lot of confusion concerning where an advance ticket holder stood, versus on-site registrants, and that was **Problem #1**. Those people were bottlenecked with everyone else, when they should have been able to gain quick entrance.

Problem #2 occurred, when on-site registration became overwhelmed. The two collided, when everyone tried to get into the exhibit hall

at the same time. By the time the state troopers barred entry to any new people wanting to gain access to the exhibit hall, it was already too late. Advanced and onsite fans clashed like Jedi vs. Sith, and sparks flew. Had those 500 arrived at the show early, yes, they would have been waiting in line, but they would have been able to enter the show.

Reed and Javits Center personnel estimated that on Saturday they turned away more than 6,000 people who came to the show but had not purchased advance tickets. Estimates of between 15,000 and 20,000 people legitimately got into the show on Saturday — and into the exhibit hall.

Reports from longtime Javits Center personnel, including the facility manager, described the massive crowds on Saturday as "something unseen here in 20 years for a show of that size."

Are you realizing the math yet? By those numbers, that means that the New York Comic-Con got between 10,000 and 15,000 walk-ups on Saturday alone. And I can hear you all going, "But, yeah, that's what we're complaining about. They should have *known* they would get that many people. They had an amazing guest list, and, for gosh sakes, it's freakin' New York City!"

To be fair, yes, the show did pull off a phenomenal comics-centric guest list in the month leading up to the show. Frank Miller, Todd McFarlane, Jim Lee, Brian Michael Bendis, and Brad Meltzer were just some of the big names, but there were hundreds of others the likes of whom New York City has never seen. I can hear the fans screaming, "*Exactly!* They should have known to expect gargantuan crowds. This is the first time in years that a big show like this has happened in New York." But, once again, I go back to the facts with a bit of history.

History lessons. A bit of New York City comic con history: The last time a show like this was held at the Javits Center in New York City was in 1994 (in February, mind you, which was always the month that the big New York comics show was held by Great Eastern Conventions — the biggest for-profit promoter of comics cons in the country at the time). Even back then, during the big boom of the comics industry, the show barely got more than 20,000 attendees. Reports of 15,000 to 18,000 attendees total for a weekend were usually stated. This was during a time when San Diego used to get around 25,000 people.

How do I know so much about this era? Well, for one, I wrote the article that broke the story of the downfall of Great Eastern Conventions in ***CBG*** at the time. The promoter ended up canceling its February 1995 convention the day before the show was to begin at the New York Coliseum Convention Center after reports of safety issues and of not filing proper floor plans with the fire marshal came out, among

other problems. If you think the problems that occurred at the New York Comic-Con seemed bad, imagine flying across the country (or the world), as many fans and exhibitors did back then, only to find out the show had been canceled and no refunds were being given. That weekend, a few New York-area dealers put together a replacement show around the corner from the Coliseum, where creators, dealers, and fans could go instead. That show has grown into what's now known as Big Apple Conventions, which puts on its shows across from Madison Square Garden at the Penn Plaza Pavilion several times a year.

In comparison, today, the Big Apple Comic Con, which puts on its annual big three-day show each November, saw its best show a few months back with about 8,500 attendees for the weekend. (And it had Carrie Fisher as a guest of honor, plus a ton of major comics celebs.)

A year later in 1996, Nick Barrucci of Dynamic Forces put together a large three-day convention during the summer at the Sheraton Hotel in midtown Manhattan using his connections with the comics creative community. The show was a moderate success, with weekend attendance of approximately 10,000 fans. That first show lost money and a second one was never done.

With even this most basic information, why would anyone assume that the New York Comic-Con would get more than 15,000 people on Saturday alone? The logical answer is: *They wouldn't.* No one could have prepared for this as a first-time show.

What amazed me even more is the fact that this was a comics-centric show! That means there were few exhibitors related to movies, TV, toys, or games. They didn't have dozens of Hollywood celebrities with non-comics fans banging down doors to get an autograph. They didn't have dozens of toy exclusives, as has been the norm at San Diego for the last four years. They put on a "comics show."

And guess what? Reed did what no comics

Reports from longtime Javits Center personnel, including the facility manager, described the massive crowds on Saturday as "something unseen here in 20 years for a show of that size."

"At least you know your marketing worked." — *DC President and Publisher Paul Levitz*

show promoter in New York City (including the old Phil Seuling New York shows and the Great Eastern shows) had ever been able to pull off. They brought in the largest, most diverse list of publishers and exhibitors (including all the majors) that a New York comics convention has ever seen. They had more major comics guests, and far more elaborate panels and presentations, than any other convention *ever* held in New York City.

From the horse's mouth. I spoke at length with Greg Topalian, the show director and VP of the Launch Pad Group (the division responsible for starting new shows at Reed), about 10 days after the show. The information he revealed was astonishing to me.

First and foremost, Reed registers each and every attendee, and the numbers it reports are the real numbers. Believe it or not, at press time, the promoter *still* didn't have a final attendance accounting, due to the chaotic nature of trying to get as many people wristbanded as fast as possible on Saturday, with the group planning on entering in all the registration info after the show. They still have stacks of paper that still need to be hand entered, but it's almost done.

What he *did* provide me was solid estimates based on the information he had that far into the process. He estimated that, when the final numbers are in, New York Comic-Con will have brought in at least 35,000 individual attendees. That means that folks who purchased three-day passes count as *one* person, not three. If they count the number of tickets sold and add up all three days, Topalian said that he wouldn't be surprised if the number was between 40,000 and 45,000.

But here is the most startling fact of all: *Topalian said that the show still lost money!* I'm sure you're all asking yourselves: How is that possible? They had an attendance that was almost triple what they'd expected.

And then the other shoe dropped.

Reed had spent more than $250,000 in cash on advertising and promotion. TV ads on Cartoon Network and The Sci-Fi Channel aren't cheap. That's what happens, when you go to the big boys. This doesn't include another $200,000 worth of promotion spent in strategic ad swaps, promotions, and partnerships in which no physical cash was spent.

Topalian told me that it had all started with a dinner meeting he had at Book Expo in 2004 with Steve Geppi, owner of Diamond Comic Distributors, Diamond Select Toys, Alliance Distribution, Gemstone Publishing, *etc.* To paraphrase, Geppi told him how disappointing it was that there was no East Coast equivalent of San Diego's con, especially in New York, where the major publisher are.

Topalian's answer: "Let's do it."

So, for the next year, with Diamond as a key sponsor, sharing industry information, insights, and mailing lists, the planning began. Topalian said that things took a long time to come together, and, even more, he takes the blame for all the mistakes in organization and communication breakdown that occurred with attendees and potential attendees on Saturday of the show. He's offered refunds to the famed 500. He's given out free passes for next year's show to countless people.

And, mark my words, there will, indeed, be a show next year. It will be in a larger hall, with wider aisles and even more exhibitors than before.

Topalian related a conversation he had with DC President and Publisher Paul Levitz after Saturday's misfortunes. "At least you know your marketing worked," Levitz said.

You see, DC, Marvel, and other large exhibitors wanted a good turnout. They were spending an enormous amount of money to set up a large display and bringing in dozens of creators from around the globe to attend and meet fans. The show could have bombed. Or, best-case scenario, it could have had the expected 10,000 to 15,000 people, and everyone would say, "Well, we'll still come next year but we can't afford to go all-out, the way we did before."

Many exhibitors have already re-booked for next year — with larger booths. Most exhibitors (including me) did exceptionally well at the show, and everyone was more than happy with the attendance.

I'll leave you with positive thoughts from fans who'd had a positive experience.

"So, yeah, it was a nightmare getting in (*if* you got in), but, once inside, it was the stuff of dreams." *Brett — New Jersey*

"I stood in line for over an hour and a half. *But it was awesome.*" *Joe Pascone — Rhode Island*

In a world in which not every new show can be deemed a success (despite reported attendance of more than 8,000 people at its inaugural Boston convention, Wizard cancelled its 2006 show in that city), let's forgive those who have owned up to their mistakes and agreed to fix those problems — and gear up for a dynamite show in 2007. The New York Comic-Con has unbelievable potential and, if done right, could become the second largest show of its kind in the country. I can't wait to see how it grows.

MARC PATTEN owns Heroes In Action (**www.heroesinaction.com**), a mail-order and convention-based company specializing in comics and toys from the 1960s to today. E-mail Marc at **HeroesInAction@aol.com** or call him at (203) 820-4447. For more pictures and news from Toy Fair, turn to Page 30.

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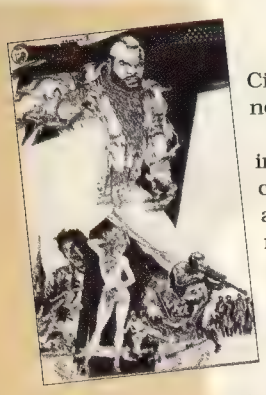
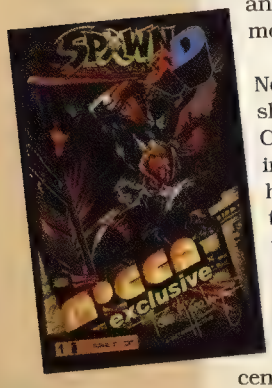
Beating February's chill in NYC

New York Comic-Con hot with variants

by **WILLIAM INSIGNARES**



Among the variants at the New York Comic-Con were a Jim Steranko cover for* Mr. T *#1 (above) and a MoCCA 3-D edition of* Spawn *(below).



This past February, I visited New York City. It was supposed to be freezing, but I never felt cold.

February was one of the coldest winters in New York, as a record snowfall buried the city on the 12th, causing airports to close and bringing traffic to a halt. Central Park recorded almost 27 inches of snow by the middle of that day, breaking the record of 26.4 inches set in December 1947, according to the National Weather Service. Nearly 12 days later, on Feb. 24, the first day of the New York Comic-Con, some parts of the city still had patches of snow and ice that had not melted since that fateful day. The wind-chill factor at night that weekend was below zero.

While that unsettling news may have caused many people to stay indoors for fear of the sub-human weather, the city that never sleeps was dealing with a different breed of visitors. It consists of the resilient, dedicated, proud, and often misunderstood: the legion of faithful comic-book fans. They came from everywhere and descended on the Javits Center by the thousands. They waited outside in lines hundreds of people long, as far as the eye could see. The excitement and expectation of what lay ahead just beyond the convention doors was enough to keep them warm, while they anxiously awaited entry. Inside those walls was a bustling machine of energy and movement of a sort not seen in many years, as this show was one of the most anticipated comics-industry gatherings in more than 10 years.

The first of what is hoped to be an annual New York Comic-Con was under way and it should have been dubbed the New York Comics Stock Exchange. Retailers were dealing, and dealers were retailing. People were having fun and, what was more important, they were spending a lot of money. Sunday, usually recognized as the slowest day of any con, felt like Comic-Con International: San Diego on a Saturday. Cash and credit cards were exchanging hands back and forth so fast, those speeding limbs were reminiscent of a Superman vs. Flash race.

In the variant arena, three players seemed to dominate, set the mood, and even control the spending, sometimes for an hour at a time:

1) Midtown Comics had an *Astonishing X-Men* #13 sketch variant that included the store's logo at the bottom. When John Cassaday was signing at the store's booth, fans had to watch out for fear of being trampled.

2) MoCCA, the Museum of Comic and Cartoon Art, was consistently busy, as it offered a *Spawn* variant in 3-D. Since Todd McFarlane was the guest of honor at the show, the thought of having him sign this prized edition was a no-brainer. When rumor circulated that McFarlane was hanging out at the MoCCA booth, you might have thought that "MoCCA" was an acronym for **M**cFarlane **O**verpowers **C**omic-**C**on **A**ficionados.

3) Then, Mig.Biz raised the roof. It kicked it up a notch with the convention exclusive of an explosive new *Mr. T* series. This variant preview of *Mr. T* #1 had an intense, old-school sketch cover pencilled by Jim Steranko! The cover reeks of raw, violent intensity mixed with urban warfare, featuring rolling dice, Kung Fu, a car crash, a token syringe, and a sexy babe packing a big pistol. It's classic Steranko rarely seen *new* these days, but most assuredly enjoyed — and *wanted*. When Steranko announced during a panel that he would be signing the coveted book at the Mig.Biz booth, it was crisis at the con. I was caught at rush hour, pinned at the busy spot by swarming fans, and learned that this new, up-and-coming company also had the rights to do an 30th anniversary *Rocky* trading-card set that would include art and scenes from all six *Rocky* movies!

Comics specialist **WILLIAM INSIGNARES** runs DemolitionComics.com in Tampa, Fla., which he bills as "The world's first multi-lingual international comics super store." He can be contacted at (813) 832-2692.

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Archie's Pal, Jughead #171

This issue contains three tales that take Jughead where no comics character has gone before (at least this month). Jug takes on the job of getting a big-city food critic, Eaton Grubb, to review Pop's tasty burgers after Segarini runs an ad claiming his have been rated tops in Riverdale. After a series of adventures best described as disastrous — well, this is an Archie comic.

ARCHIE
WRITER:
CRAIG BOLDMAN
ARTISTS:
REX LINDSEY, RICH KOSLOWSKI
COLOR • 32 PGS.
$2.25

Food seems to be the driving factor this issue. Even "Fast Friends" and "Meal Zeal Spiel" showcase Jughead at his hungry best. Whether 'tis nobler to motivate athletes with thoughts of food or athletic acclaim, trust Jug to do what is best for his palate. The snack bar at the hockey game or Philly's Subs: It's all food to Jug!

Jughead #171 is consistently good. It, you could say, contains all the comic-book ingredients in a menu for success.

★★ **— Tim Lasiuta**

www.archiecomics.com

RetroView The AMAZING SPIDER-MAN '92-'93

MARVEL COMICS

Reviewed by Brent Frankenhoff

Plenty of background stories are revealed in 1993, as David Michelinie provides additional material on such characters as Cardiac, Styx and Stone, Carnage, Venom, and Flash Thompson.

More mysteries are developed, as Aunt May hires a private investigator to check out the stories being told by Peter's long-lost parents. Along the way, there are revelations about May and Ben.

The big event of the year is the three issues that tie in to the 14-part "Maximum Carnage," so dust off those other Spider-titles, if you want the complete picture.

Amazing Spider-Man ™ Marvel

	UNSLABBED Near Mint	SLABBED CGC 9.4 NM
Action Comics		
DC, 1938		
0	3	
1	330000	
➥1st Superman		
1/Ashcan	20000	
2	29250	
3	19000	
4-5	10600	
6	15400	
7	15500	
8-9	6650	
10	8200	
11-12	4150	
13	6175	
14	3825	
15	6175	
16	3125	
17	4350	
18	3825	
19	4050	
20	3825	
21-22	2600	
23	7300	
➥1st Luthor		
24-25	2475	
26	2060	
27-30	1700	
31-32	2600	
33	7300	
➥1st Mr. America		
34-35	2475	
36	2060	
37-40	1700	
41	1050	
42	2600	
➥1st Vigilante		
43-46	980	
47	1300	
➥1st Luthor cover		
48-52	980	
53	850	
54-60	710	
61-63	630	
64	750	
65-70	630	
71-75	580	
76	580	843
77-99	580	
100	600	
101	1200	
➥A-Bomb cover		
102-103	525	
104	525	1275
105-126	525	
127	600	
128-141	525	
142	525	1900
143-146	525	
147	525	1347
148-150	525	
151-157	480	
158	750	
➥Superman origin		
159-161	450	
162	500	2314
163-180	385	
181-201	340	
202-220	290	
221-240	240	
241	250	
242	1200	
➥1st Brainiac		
243-251	185	
252	1200	
➥1st Supergirl		
253	425	
254	325	
255	225	
256-261	100	
262	90	
263	100	
264-266	80	
267	650	2604
➥1st Colossal Boy		
268-270	80	
271-275	65	
276	125	
➥Legion app		
277-284	60	
285	100	
➥Legion app		
286-294	60	
295	90	373
296	65	253
297	90	369
298-299	60	
300-313	50	
314	50	211
315-316	50	
317-320	40	
321	40	234
322-324	40	
325	50	192
326-333	40	
334	60	
335-338	40	
339	70	288
340-341	40	
342	40	157
343-346	40	
347	50	
348-353	40	
354	40	70
355-357	40	
358	40	129
359	40	167
360-361	40	
362	40	168
363	30	130
364-368	30	
369	30	139
370-373	30	
374-383	20	
384	20	80
385	20	
386	20	75
387	20	
388	25	108
389	20	
390	20	80
391-393	20	
394	20	77
395-398	20	
399	20	67
400	40	157
401	17	68
402	17	
403	17	58
404	17	69
405	17	71
406	17	
407	15	67
408	20 ▽	84
409	15	68
410	13	55
411	13	56
412	12	55
413	12	51
414-415	12	
416	11	44
417	11 △	37
418	11	43
419	14	56
420	11	
421	11	56
422	11	
423	10	38
424	10	35
425	19	77
426	10	45
427	8	34
428-430	8	
431	8	29
432	8	28
433	8	25
434-436	8	
437	29	103
➥Giant-size issue		
438-439	8	
440	25	
➥1st Grell Green Arrow		
441	12	
442	8	
443	26	106
➥Giant-size issue		
444	7	
445	7	40
446-447	7	
448	7	28
449	7	46
450	7	27
451-454	7	
455-465	6	
466	7	29
467-470	5	
471	5	14
472	5	
473	5	20
474-484	5	
485	8	34
486-499	5	
500	5 △	24
501-503	5	
504-509	4	
510	4	16
511-543	4	
544	4	14
545-566	3	
567-597	2	
598	15	12
➥1st Checkmate		
599	2	5
600	5	17
601	2	6
602-659	2	
660	3	
661	2	
662	4	15
663-682	2	
683	3	
684	3	12
685-687	2	
687 Collector's	3	
688-695	2	
695/Vanant	3	
696-699	2	
700	3	
700/Platinum	5	
701-769	2	
770	4	
771-774	2	
775	5	18
775/2nd	4	
776-799	2	
800	4	
801-810	2	
811	5	
812	8	
812/2nd	2	
813	4	
814-817	3	
818	4	
819-825	3	
826	5	
➥Int. Crisis tie		
827-828	3	
829	6	
829/Variant	3	
830	4	
831-836	3	
1000000	1	
Ann 1	4	
Ann 2-6	3	
Ann 7	4	
Ann 8	3	
Ann 9	4	
Adventure Comics		
DC, 1938		
32	2800	
33-35	1450	
36-39	1275	
40	36000	
➥1st Sandman		
41	4700	
42	5500	
43	3200	
44	5500	
45	2800	
46-47	4200	
48	22000	
➥1st Hourman		
49-50	1950	
51	2630	
➥Sandman cover		
52	1600	
➥1st Kirk Manhunter		
53-59	1450	
60	2500	
61	10750	
➥1st Starman		
62-65	1300	
66	1800	
67-68	1300	
69	1650	
70-71	1275	
72	13200	
➥1st Kirby Sandman		
73	11500	
➥1st Kirby Manhunter		
74	1500	3875
75-80	1500	
81-91	925	
92-94	700	
95	700	2203
96	700 ▽	1660
97	700	
98	700	1575
99	700	
100	800	3150
101-102	700	
103	2400	
➥Super-heroes start		
104	850	
105	525	1500
106	525	
107	525	2013
108-110	525	
111	450	
112	450	1083
113-120	450	
121-126	390	
127	450	
128	400	
129-130	375	
131-140	340	
141	340	1206
142-149	340	
150-151	425	
152	310	
153	425	
154	310	
155	425	
156	310	
157	425	
158	310	
159	425	
160	310	
161	425	
162	310	
163	425	
164-169	310	
170-180	255	
181-199	235	
200	350	
201-209	260	
210	2400	

△ #1

TEEN TITANS SPOTLIGHT

Solo spotlights

Launched in 1986, *Teen Titans Spotlight* allowed the individual members of DC's popular team of young heroes to have solo adventures. Later issues teamed members or focused on supporting cast members or, in at least one case, villains.

Image © 1986 DC

	Starfire	Starfire	Jericho	Jericho	Jericho	Jericho	Hawk	Hawk
	1 AUG 86	2 SEP 86	3 OCT 86	4 NOV 86	5 DEC 86	6 JAN 87	7 FEB 87	8 MAR 87
NM Price	$1	$1	$1	$1	$1	$1	$1	$1

THE BOTTOM LINE

Amazing Spider-Man #369 ★★★

© Marvel

Marvel • Nov 1992
Writer: David Michelinie, J.M. DeMatteis
Pencils: Various
Inks: Various
Cover: Mark Bagley, Randy Emberlin

"Electric Doom" • 16 pp.

Spider-Man's battle with Electro is interrupted by another robot attack.

C'mon, guys, how about solving one mystery at a time here? "Invasion of the Spider-Slayers" is taking too much of the focus off the perplexing Parker parental puzzle. And what's up with the reintroduction of The Black Cat and her mysterious meeting with The Tinkerer at story's end?

"More Bad News" • 6 pp.

Liz tells Harry Osborn about the return of Peter's parents.

J.M. DeMatteis continues the string of intriguing back-ups in these biweekly issues. They're actually better than the main feature.

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	UNSLABBED Near Mint	SLABBED CGC 9.4 NM
211-220	200	
221-246	170	
247	4400	
➥1st Legion		
248-255	130	
256	525	
257-259	125	
260	500	
➥Aquaman origin		
261-266	80	
267	740	
➥2nd Legion		
268	80	
269	225	
➥1st Aqualad		
270	80	
271	225	
272-274	65	
275	145	
276-277	65	
278	65	272
279-280	65	
281	60	
282	95	
283	100	
284	60	
285-286	110	
287-289	60	
290	100	
291-292	45	
293	100	
294	90	
➥1st Mon-El Legion		
295-298	45	
299	55	
300	200	
301	70	
302-305	55	
306-323	45	
324-339	40	
340	45	179
341-345	40	
346	60	298
347-349	40	
350	40	165
351	50	228
➥1st White Witch		
352	50	210
353-355	35	
356	30	
357	60	430
358-366	30	
367-372	25	
373	22	
374	30	146
375-377	22	
378	45	190
379-380	22	
381	60	231
➥Supergirl starts		
382-385	22	
386	22	76
387	22	62
388-389	22	
390	30 ▽	115
391	22	66
392-400	22	
401-402	21	
403	50	264
404	20	57
405	20	
406	20	80
407-414	20	
415	20	87
416	18	
417	13	
418	13	50
419	13	46
420	13	57
421	13	49
422-425	13	
426	13	42
427	13	
428	28 ▽	104
➥1st Black Orchid		
429	15	
430	15	35
431	28	104
➥Aparo Spectre		
432	15	57
433	15 △	48
434	12	40
435	12 △	51
436	10	44
437	10	36
438	10	60
439	10	41
440	10	58
441	10	
442-447	6	
448	5	20
449	5	
450	5	19
451-452	5	
453	5	18
454	5	15
455-458	5	
459	4	32
460	4	
461	6	
462	7	
463-479	4	
480-503	3	

All Star Batman
DC, 2005

	UNSLABBED Near Mint	SLABBED CGC 9.4 NM
1/Batman	5	21
1/Robin	5	
1/Special	4	
1/RRP	150	
2/Both	4	
3	3	

All-Star Comics
DC, 1940

	UNSLABBED Near Mint	SLABBED CGC 9.4 NM
1	10000	
2	3500	
3	25000	
➥1st JSA		
4	3000	
5	2800	
➥1st Hawkgirl		
6-7	1800	
8	16000	
➥1st Wonder Woman		
9-11	1600	
12-15	1400	
16-17	1200	
18	1200 ▽	3560
19-25	1200	
26-31	900	
32	900 ▽	2683
33	1800	
➥Grundy appearance		
34-35	900	
36	1300	
➥Batmn, Supes app		
37	900	
38	975	4125
➥Black Canary starts		
39-49	900	
50	975	
➥Frazetta art		
51-55	900	
56	900 ▽	3460
57	1200	
➥25-year hiatus starts		
58	12	73
➥1st Power Girl		
59-61	6	
62	8	35
63	6	17
64	7	29
65	7	30
66	8	17
67-68	6	
69	10	42
70-73	6	
74	8	33

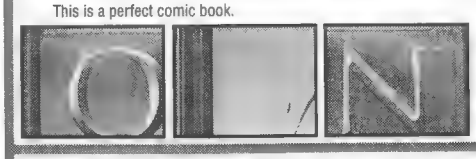
Do-It-Yourself Grading

While **CGC** keeps its grading standards private, these are the **traditional** condition definitions...

Mint

Abbreviated: **M**

This is a perfect comic book.



The term for this grade is the same one used for **CGC's 10.0 grade.**

Its cover has full luster, with edges sharp and pages like new. There are no signs of wear or aging. It is not imperfectly printed or off-center.

Occasionally referred to as "Gem Mint," a term used by sportscard dealers.

Near Mint

Abbreviated: **NM**

This is a nearly perfect comic book.

The term for this grade is the same one used for **CGC's 9.4 grade.**

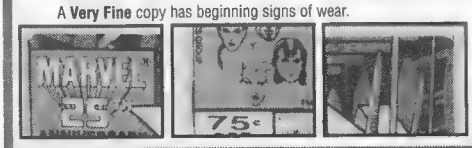
Its cover shows barely perceptible signs of wear.

Its spine is tight, and its cover has only minor loss of luster and only minor printing defects. Some discoloration is acceptable in older comics — as are signs of aging.

Very Fine

Abbreviated: **VF**

A **Very Fine** copy has beginning signs of wear.



The term for this grade is the same one used for **CGC's 8.0 grade.**

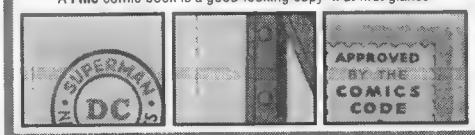
There can be slight creases and wrinkles at the staples, but it is a flat, clean issue with definite signs of being read a few times.

There is some loss of the original gloss, but it is in general an attractive comic book.

Fine

Abbreviated: **F, Fn**

A **Fine** comic book is a good-looking copy .. at first glance



The term for this grade is the same one used for **CGC's 6.0 grade.**

This comic book's cover is worn but flat and clean with no defacement. There is usually no writing on the cover or tape repair.

Stress lines around the staples and more rounded corners are permitted.

Very Good

Abbreviated: **VG**

A **Very Good** comic book is well-read and has some problems.

The term for this grade is the same one used for **CGC's 4.0 grade.**

Most of the original gloss is gone. There are minor markings, discoloration, and/or heavier stress lines around the staples and spine.

The cover may have minor tears and/or corner creases, and spine-rolling is generally permissible.

Good

Abbreviated: **G, Gd**

A **Good** copy is a very worn comic book with nothing missing.

The term for this grade is the same one used for **CGC's 2.0 grade.**

Creases, minor tears, rolled spine, and cover flaking are generally permissible in this grade.

Older Golden Age comic books often come in this condition.

Fair

Abbreviated: **FA, Fr.**

A **Fair** copy has multiple problems but is structurally intact.

The term for this grade is the same one used for **CGC's 1.0 grade.**

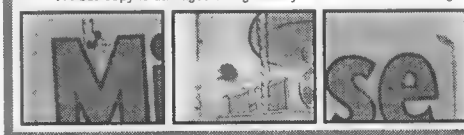
Copies may have a soiled, slightly damaged cover, a badly rolled spine, cover flaking, corners gone, and tears.

Tape may be present and is always considered a defect.

Poor

Abbreviated: **P, Pr**

A **Poor** copy is damaged and generally unsuitable for collecting.



The term for this grade is the same one used for **CGC's 0.5 grade.**

While the copy may still contain some readable stories, major defects get in the way

Copies may be in the process of disintegrating and may do so with even light handling.

	9 APR 87	10 MAY 87	11 JUN 87	12 JUL 87	13 AUG 87	14 SEP 87	15 OCT 87	16 NOV 87	17 DEC 87	18 JAN 88	19 FEB 88	20 MAR 88	21 APR 88
	Changeling	Aqualad	Brotherhood of Evil	Wonder Girl	Cyborg	Nightwing, Batman	Omega Men	Thunder, Lightning, Magenta (Frances Kane)		*Millennium* crossover; Aqualad in #18, Starfire in #19	Changeling, Cyborg	Original Titans	
NM Price	$1	$1	$1	$1	$1	$1	$1	$1	$1	$1	$1	$1	$1

PRICE GUIDE KEY: OTHER GRADES **Unslabbed (loose) Very Fine/Near Mint** is **5/6** (83%) of the unslabbed NM price above **Fine (F)** is **1/3** (33%) of NM **Very Good (VG)** is **1/5** (20%) of NM **Very Fine (VF)** is **2/3** (67%) of NM **Good (G)** is **1/8** (12.5%) of NM

BoBoBo-Bo Bo-BoBo

VIZ
WRITER: YOSHIO SAWAI
ARTIST: YOSHIO SAWAI
B/W • 180 Pgs.
$7.99

In the future, the evil Maruhage Empire outlaws hair, leading to the rise of Bo-Bobo, master of the Fist of the Nose Hair. With an annoying teen-age girl sidekick named Beauty and pals Poppa Rocks (a mentally disturbed Sun), Jelly Jiggler (a Gingerbread Man made of gelatin), and Softon (whose head is excrement) Bo-Bobobo travels around kicking butt.

This *Fist of the North Star* spoof isn't as disgusting as you'd expect from a series in which the hero uses complete control of his nose hair to fight evil, but it's still crude and intentionally stupid, like a collision between *South Park* and *SpongeBob SquarePants*. And you have to believe some of its appeal in Japan comes from its grade-school readership knowing they can draw just as badly.

It speaks to Viz' lack of confidence in this that it isn't labeled "Volume One" (it starts after the beginning of the series) and there's no indication that there's going to be a Volume Two. It demonstrates that some things don't need translating.

No ★s **— S.A. Bennett**

www.shonenjump.com
ISBN: 1-42150-235-6

RETROVIEW
Amazing Spider-Man #370 ★★★½

"Life Stings!" • 16 pp.

Spider-Man faces The Scorpion and an amoeboid robot with The Black Cat's help.

With only a single gratuitous sequence with Peter's parents, this issue focuses more squarely on the Spider-Slayer story, which is good. Referring to Mendel Stromm, a villain who's been dead for years, is almost as bad as reviving The Tinkerer, who hadn't been heard from in nearly 20 years.

"The Web" • 6 pp.

Aunt May pays a visit to Uncle Ben's grave and reveals more of her past.

The best of J.M. DeMatteis' backup features, this should have been researched by Mark Millar for *Trouble*.

Marvel • Dec 1992
Writers: David Michelinie, J.M. DeMatteis
Pencils: Various
Inks: Various
Cover: Mark Bagley, Randy Emberlin

Avg CGC copy: **9.8** **Then $1.25 NOW $2**

© Marvel

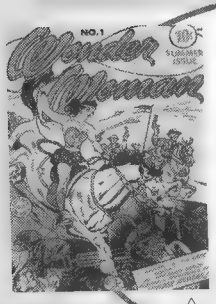
Amazing Fantasy	UNSLABBED Near Mint	SLABBED CGC 9.4 NM
MARVEL, 1962		
15	32000	
➥1st Spider-Man		
16-18	5	

Amazing Spider-Man	UNSLABBED Near Mint	SLABBED CGC 9.4 NM
MARVEL, 1963		
-1	3	
1	27000	
➥1st Chameleon		
1/Golden	200	588
2	3400	
➥1st Vulture		
3	4600	16303
➥1st Dr. Octopus		
4	2300	10050
➥1st Sandman		
5	2500	9678
➥Dr Doom app.		
6 ▽	1650	6724
➥1st Lizard		
7	1100	4375
8 ▽	800	2884
9	1025	4271
➥1st Electro		
10	990	3875
11	1900	5774
12	825	3215
13	1200	5058
➥1st Mysterio		
14	2050	7901
➥1st Green Goblin		
15	1800	7801
➥1st Kraven		
16 ▽	800	3201
17	800	3156
➥2nd Green Goblin		
18 △	510	2149
19	460	1837
20	510	2275
21	510	1915
22	425	1702
23	510	2350
24	500	2041
25	500	
26	550	2250
27	500	1771
28	450	3871
29	240	976
30	240	893
31	325	1491
32	175	734
33 ▽	140	561
34	240	927
35	225	927
36	225	941
37	250	979
38 ▽	195	806
39	350	1610
➥1st Romita Spidey		
40	375	1336
➥Goblin origin		
41	300	1245
➥1st Rhino		
42	185	768
➥1st view of MJ		
43 ▽	120	497
44	175	713
45 △	115	501
46	250	806
➥1st Shocker		
47	105	435
48	120	499
49	125	532
50	625	2895
➥Spidey quits		
51	200	845
52	150	638
53 ▲	105	422
54	110	471
55	110	488
56	90	375
57 ▽	80	331
58	100	415
59 ▽	70	311
60	105	496
61 △	72	318
62 △	75	300
63 ▲	160	728
➥vs. both Vultures		
64 ▽	60	245
65 △	55	250
66 ▽	80	340
67 △	60	277
➥1st Randy		
68 ▽	60	253
69	75	323
70	70	329
71 ▽	70	306
72	85	366
73	50	249
74	80	330
75 ▽	65	300
76	65	307
77	65	326
78	70	323
79	60	256
80	60	
81	55	245
82 ▽	50	267
83 △	50	257
84	55	254
85	55	236
86	60	577
87	75	338
88	60	248
89	70	319
90	75	336
91	50	205
92 ▽	62	268
93	80	383
94 ▽	65	273
95 ▽	52	238
96	85	333
97 ▽	72	275
98 ▽	80	321
99	60	256
100 ▲	100	417
101	130	589
102	105	438
➥Morbius origin		
103	50	194
104	90	346
105 ▽	25	106
106	40	165
107 △	27	119
108 △	27	115
109	30	126
110	30	122
111	34	137
112 ▽	30	131
113 ▽	35	141
114	50	219
115 ▽	33	136
116	22	97
117 △	25	93
118 ▽	22	101
119 △	50	199
120 ▽	50	186
➥vs. Hulk		
121 △	150	569
➥Gwen Stacy dies		
122 ▽	150	520
➥Green Goblin dies		
123	35	145
124	42	184
125 ▽	30	140
126	18	79
127	25	98
128	20	93
129 △	225	768
➥1st Punisher		
129/Ace	6	
130 ▽	20	93
131	25	95
➥Uncle Doc Ock		
132	22	86
133	16	76
134 ▲	28	124
➥2nd Punisher		
135 ▽	45	193
136 △	60	246
➥Harry as Goblin II		
137 ▽	25	99
138 ▽	15	56
139	19	75
140	17	71
141 ▽	15	63
142 △	18	74
143	15	65
144 ▲	17	70
145 ▲	15	63
146	15	56
147 ▽	14	52
148	25	108
149	27	130
➥Spider-clone dies		
150	16	79
151	24	113
152 ▽	11	45
153 △	10	40
154 △	10	37
155 ▽	12	47
155/30¢	20	
156	12	50
156/30¢	20	
157 △	12	50
157/30¢	40	208
158 △	10	31
158/30¢	20	
159 ▽	11	39
➥vs. Doc Ock		
159/30¢	20	201
160	9	36
161	12	49
162 ▲	11	50
163	10	42
164	12	50
165 △	9	34
166	9	35
167 ▽	7	29
168 △	7	27
169 ▽	10	38
169/35¢	15	
170 ▽	7	31
170/35¢	15	
171 △	7	28
171/35¢	15	
172	8	37
172/35¢	15	
173	18	75
173/35¢	25	75
174	10	41
175	10	36
176 △	12	58
177 ▽	12	41
178 △	11	42
179 ▽	11	44
180 ▽	11	49
181	9	32
182	8	31
183 △	7	28
184 △	8	37
185 △	7	27
186	8	31
187	8	37
188 ▽	7	33
189 ▽	6	27
190 △	7	29
191 ▽	6	27
192 △	6	27
193	6	25
194 △	21	85
➥1st Black Cat		
195	10	39
196 △	6	23
197 △	6	27
198 ▽	6	26
199	7	26
200 ▽	10	38
201 ▽	9	36
202	7	29
203	6	22
204	8	28
205	6	24
206 △	6	22
207	5	22
208 △	6	25
209 △	6	26
210	6	25
211 ▽	6	24
212	5	21
213	5	22
214	5	18
215	5	22
216	5	19
217	5	20
218	5	19
219	6	22
220 ▽	6	26
221	4	
222 ▲	4	21
223	5	22
224	4	19
225 ▽	4	15
226 ▽	7	25
227	6	23
228 ▽	4	20
229	11	33
230	6	23
231	6	23
232	6	22
233 △	4	16
234	6	18
235	4	19
236	5	19
237	5	18
238 △	22	85
239 ▽	10	35
240 ▽	5	17
241 △	4	18
242	5	
243	6	23
244	5	24
245	5	21
246	4	13
247	4	18
248	4	23
249	5	22
250	6	26
251 ▽	6	23
252 ▽	10	42
➥1st black costume		

The shaded column indicates **AVERAGE ACTUAL ONLINE AUCTION prices paid** for **slabbed CGC 9.4 (NM) copies** of each issue.

Only those comics that have sold in 9.4 (NM) **more than once** are included in our list. For items that have been sold online many times, we only average the **25 most recent** closed auctions.

We've tracked more than 250,000 online auctions for CGC comics since June 2000. If we don't list a market price, there simply isn't one yet.



△ #1

Wonder Woman

From *All-Star* to *Sensation* to *Wonder*

After being introduced in *All-Star Comics* #8 (Jan 42), Wonder Woman went on to headline *Sensation Comics* that same month and, that summer, received her own title. Her origin, as well as that of her Amazonian sisters, was retold in the first issue.

image © 1942 DC

Origin retold — 1st Dr. Psycho — 1st Cheetah — Invasion from Saturn

NM	1 SUM 42	2 FAL 42	3 FEB 43	4 APR 43	5 JUN 43	6 FAL 43	7 WIN 43	8 SPR 44	9 SUM 44	10 FAL 44
Price	$17000	$3100	$1900	$1200	$1050	$900	$900	$900	$900	$900

Amazing Spider-Man #371 ★★★

© Marvel

"One Clue over the Cuckoo's Nest" • 16 pp.

The Black Cat helps Spider-Man in his latest Spider-Slayer fight.

With "Invasion of the Spider-Slayers" heading for its final two chapters, Spidey finally gets the clues he needs to figure out who's really after him. Now, if only David Michelinie would give readers a few more clues about the Parkers.

"Strained Relations" • 6 pp.

Mary Jane reflects on her life, as she works on a difficult acting scene.

J.M. DeMatteis' back-ups have now turned into mini-"origin" stories for Spidey's supporting cast. And that's not a bad thing.

Marvel • Dec 1992
Writers: David Michelin[illegible] J.M. DeMatteis
Pencils: Variou[illegible]
Inks: Various
Cover: Mark [illegible] y Emberlin

copy 9.8 Then $1.25 NOW $2

	Unslabbed Near Mint		Slabbed CGC 9.4 NM
253	5		20
254	5		18
255	4		16
256	4	△	17
257	4	△	17
258	4		15
259	5	△	19
260	5	▽	19
261	5		22
262	5	△	19
263	5		20
264	4		15
265	4		17
266	3	△	14
267	3		12
268	4	△	15
269	4		
270	4		19
271	5		19
272	4		11
273	4		
274	5		18
275	5		21
276	5		20
277	4		14
278	4		16
279	4		18
280	5		22
281	5		19
282	5		22
283	5		19
284	5		19
285	6		20
286	4		16
287	5		
288	6		22
289	6	△	21
290	5		21
291	5		18
292	5		21
293	5		22
294	6		20
295	6		25
296	5		19
297	6		23
298 ➥McFarlane starts	12	▽	43
299 ➥Venom cameo	9	△	33
300 ➥1st Venom	35	▲	141
301	6		22
302	4		17
303	5		19
304	4		15
305	4		15
306	4		17
307	4		16
308	5		16
309	4		14
310	5		19
311	5		18
312	5	▽	21
313	5	△	18
314	4		17
315	5		18
316	5		22
317	6		21
318	6		20
319	5		18
320	3		12
321	4		16
322	5		18
323	3		12
324	5		17
325	4		14
326	4		14
327	4		14
328	5	▽	16
329	4		16
330	3		
331	3		11
332	3		
333	3		12
334	3		12
335-343	3		
344 ➥1st Cletus Kassidy	4		14
345	3		
346	3		14
347	3		15
348-352	2		
353	2		9
354	3		17
355-357	2		
358	6		20
359	2		
360	3		11
361 ➥1st Carnage	6	△	21
362 ➥2nd Carnage	25		64
363	4		16
364	3		
365	4		17
366-369	2		
370	3		
371-373	2		
374	3		
375	5		16
376	4		
377	3		
378	4		
379	5		20
380	3		
381	4		16
382	3		15
383-384	3		
385	3		14
386-388	3		
388/Variant	2		
389-394	3		
394/Variant	4		
395-399	3		
400 ➥no overlay	5		21
400/Gray ➥gray overlay	6		27
400/White ➥white overlay	30		21
401-432	2		
432/Variant	5		
433-441	2		
500	5		18
501	4		
502	3		
503-509	2		
509/DirCut ➥Director's Cut	7		
510	4		
511	3		
512	5		
513	3		
514-520	2		
521-529	3		
Aim Giveaway 1	4		
Aim Giveaway 2	2		
Ann 1 ➥1st Sinister Six	700		3166
Ann 2	550		2366
Ann 3	140		594
Ann 4	90		336
Ann 5	75		281
Ann 6	35		128
Ann 7	35		139
Ann 8	22	▽	87
Ann 9	22		87
Ann 10	8	▽	29
Ann 11	8		29
Ann 12	8		32
Ann 13	7		20
Ann 14	6		26
Ann 15	7		25
Ann 16	5		18
Ann 17-18	4		
Ann 19	4		17
Ann 20-21	4		
Ann 21/Direc ➥Spidey marries	5	▽	20
Ann 22	5		20
Ann 23-25	3		
Ann 26	4		15
Ann 27-28	3		
Ann 1996	4		
Ann 1997	3		
Ashcan 1	1		

Amazing Spider-Man
MARVEL, 1999

	Unslabbed Near Mint		Slabbed CGC 9.4 NM
1	7		29
1/DF Romita	12		
1/DF Lee	35		
1/DF	5		29
1/Authentix	8		
1/Sunburst	18	△	24
2	3		
3-11	2		
12	3		
13-17	2		
18-19	3		
20	5		
21-24	2		
25	3		
25/Speckle	4		
26-29	2		
30 ➥Straczynski starts	5		18
31	3		10
32	4		15
33	4		
34	5		
35	4		19
36	9	▽	32
36/DF ➥9/11 issue	20		93
37	3		12
38	3		11
39	3		12
40	2		
41	4		14
42	3		
43	3		13
44-49	2		
50	6		19
51-55	2		
56	2		9
57-58	3		
Ann '99-'00	4		
Ann 2001	3		

Aquaman
DC, 1962

	Unslabbed Near Mint		Slabbed CGC 9.4 NM
1	900		
2	275		
3	150		570
4-5	150		
6-10	90		
11 ➥1st Mera	125		
12-14	75		
15	75		171
16-17	75		
18 ➥Weds Mera	90		
19-20	60		
21	60		183
22	60		
23	60		238
24	60		
25	60		179
26-28	60		
29 ➥1st Ocean Master	75		194
30	50		219
31	45		171
32	50		
33	45		
34	45		120
35-36	40		
37	40		151
38	40		177
39	40		
40	40		160
41	40		148
42-43	30		
44-45	25		
46	25		90
47	40		234
48-49	25		
50	75		195
51	50		175
52	40		167
53-55	20		
56	20		77
57	20		33
58	20		
59-60	10		
61	10		27
62	10		
63	10		29

Aquaman
DC, 2003

	Unslabbed Near Mint		Slabbed CGC 9.4 NM
1-14	3		
15 ➥Old costume back	12		
16-17	6		
18-40	3		

Arrgh!
MARVEL, 1974

	Unslabbed Near Mint		Slabbed CGC 9.4 NM
1	15	▽	56
2	4		
3-5	3		

Astonishing X-Men
MARVEL, 2004

	Unslabbed Near Mint		Slabbed CGC 9.4 NM
1 ➥Whedon starts	8	▽	31
1/Cassaday	45		36
1/Del Otto	12		22
1/DirCut	5		16
1/DF	8		
2	16		
3	4		
4	8		
4/Variant ➥Colossus cover	25		27
5	8		
6	5		
7	4		
8-10	3		
10/Variant	5		
11-13	3		

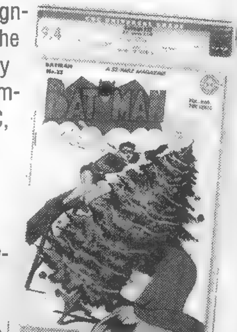
Avengers
MARVEL, 1963

	Unslabbed Near Mint		Slabbed CGC 9.4 NM
0	3		
1 ➥1st Avengers	4200		14875
1.5	3		
2	935		3367
3	750		2728
4 ➥Cap America joins	1450		5442
4/Golden	40		170

Auction News

Heritage offers original owner Golden Age collection in May Signature Auction

A Rhode Island collector's original assemblage of comics, dating from 1940 to 1954, will be among the lots in Heritage Auction Galleries' upcoming Signature Auction May 11-13 at its offices in Dallas, Texas.



According to Heritage Consignment Director **Ben Samuels**, "The **Harold Curtis** collection is a very impressive original-owner assemblage consisting primarily of DC, Quality, and Lev Gleason titles. Highlights include long runs of *Detective, Batman* (including a *Batman* #33, CGC-graded NM 9.4 with a double cover), *Sensation, World's Finest, Police Comics, Smash Comics,* and *Boy Comics.* Other titles of note include *Comic Cavalcade, Silver Streak, Crime Does Not Pay, Boy Commandos, Daredevil,* and *Wonder Woman.* Most are high grade and have excellent paper quality. Many are at the top of the CGC census.

"Many of the earlier issues have 'Harold Curtis,' 'Harold,' 'H.E.C.,' 'Curtis,' or 'H. Curtis' written in ink on the cover. Most issues have a distributor's 'p' mark in pencil or ink, others have a 'w,' and a few of the war comics have a 'k' mark. While a few of the earliest issues show considerable wear, most of the comics appear to have been read once and were stored well."

Highlights of the collection include:

Comic Cavalcade #4, CGC-graded VF/NM 9.0 with off-white to white pages.

Detective Comics #110, CGC-graded NM 9.4 with off-white to white pages.

Batman #14, CGC-graded NM 9.4 with off-white to white pages.

www.HeritageAuctions.com/Comics

	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24
	WIN 44	SPR 45	SUM 45	FAL 45	WIN 45	MAR 46 (Frequency increases)	MAY 46	JUL 46	SEP 46	NOV 46	JAN 47	MAR 47	MAY 47 (Wonder Woman's childhood)	JUL 47
NM Price	$650	$650	$650	$650	$650	$650	$650	$650	$650	$650	$450	$450	$450	$600

Buz Sawyer: The War in the Pacific

MANUSCRIPT PRESS
WRITER:
ROY CRANE
ARTIST:
ROY CRANE
B/W • 192 Pgs.
$25

At the height of *Wash Tubbs*' popularity in World War II, its creator, Roy Crane, left the comic strip to start the more realistic *Buz Sawyer* — and, after reading its first year reprinted here, the reader will see that he made the right move.

Basically, Buz is a variant of Tubbs' partner Captain Easy, but with neither that character's shadowy past nor edge. Buz is an amiable regular fighter pilot whose heroics are low-key enough to be believable. Which is for the good, since the implausible plots invariably have him and hapless sidekick Roscoe Sweeney encountering one of the artist's signature magnificent lasses on an enemy-held Pacific island.

It's easy to see how thrills and humor skillfully blended with convincing scenes both aboard ship and on the homefront would have provided civilians and servicemen of the time some much-needed wish fulfillment. And modern readers should note that, unlike many other comics creators of the time, Crane drew Japanese soldiers in a (mostly) non-stereotypical manner.

★★★ **— S.A. Bennett**

www.io.com/~norwoodr
ISBN: 0-93641-414-6

RETROVIEW
Amazing Spider-Man #372 ★★★

Marvel • Jan 1993
Writers: David Michelinie, Al Milgrom
Pencils: Various
Inks: Various
Cover: Mark Bagley, Randy Emberlin

"Arachnophobia Too!" • 17 pp.

Spider-Man and Black Cat face a trio of Spider-Slayers, and, later, Peter follows his parents to a warehouse.

It's a hard choice to decide which subplot is better, the Spider-Slayer story or the Parker puzzle. David Michelinie keeps both stories moving forward at a fast pace.

"Punch ... Counter-Punch" • 6 pp.

Peter Parker and Flash Thompson have a boxing rematch and compare parental anecdotes.

These back-ups have really helped develop Spider-Man's supporting cast and, in many cases, are more fun than the main story.

© Marvel

Best CGC copy: 9.8 — Then $1.25 NOW $2

	UNSLABBED Near Mint	SLABBED CGC 9.4 NM
Avengers		
CONTINUED		
5	350	
6	390	1384
7	460	1642
8	275 ▽	1021
9	225	
➥1st Wonder Man		
10	180	658
➥1st Hercules		
11	275 △	1027
➥Spider-Man app.		
12	115	437
13	150	610
14	150	528
15	100	376
16	125	
17	115	422
18	100 ▽	385
19	150	533
20	80 ▽	293
21	70	270
22	70	271
23	75	297
24	70 ▽	141
25	95	416
26	65	188
27	70	263
28	50	
29	50	248
30	50 △	204
31	43	212
32	37	144
33	50	169
34	55	235
35	50	188
36	35 △	127
37	40	159
38	43	
39	40	156
40	40	155
41	40	149
42	50	163
43	45	171
44	40 △	147
45	50	185
46	30	128
47	37	142
48	37	158
49	32	145
50	30	129
51	40	156
52	41	167
53	60	229
➥X-Men app.		
54	30	127
55	30	120
56	50	199
57	110	511
➥1st Vision		
58	65	235
59	40	183
60	40	153
61	30	122
62	30	132
63	30	128
64	30	114
65	30	107
66	30	126
67	45	184
68	27 △	141
69	30	141
70	30	150
71	50 △	204
72	30	111
73	30	117
74	25	95
75	25	102
76	25	101
77	20	80
78	25	105
79	23	83
80	23	
81	23	89
82	26	116
83	36	139
➥1st Valkyrie		
84	23	
85	25	106
86	25	100
87	40	164
88	25 ▽	100
89	20 ▽	107
90	22	90
91	22	89
92	26	127
93	120	476
➥Double-size		
94	35	138
95	38	153
96	35	141
97	26 △	123
98	26	71
99	30	148
100	55	222
➥Knight gets sword		
101	18	
102	16 △	71
103	40	158
➥Sentinels		
104	20 △	75
105	18	
106	17	70
107	20	65
108	12	52
109	18	63
110	25	121
111	22	83
112	25	86
113	11	53
114	15	64
115	13	60
116	27	117
➥Defenders War		
117	20	79
118	24	95
119	15	62
120	14	52
121	10 △	41
122	13	48
123	9	38
124	12 ▽	46
125	20	77
126	18	50
127	12	51
128	12 △	41
129	12	
130	15	61
131	12	49
132	10 △	37
133	8	32
134	10 ▽	34
135	10	39
136	8	31
137	8	30
138	7 ▲	31
139	7	24
140	7	31
141	10	45
142	8 ▽	31
143	8	38
144	8	37
145	8	35
146	10	47
146/30¢	20	
147	7	29
147/30¢	20	
148	12	48
148/30¢	18	72
149	6	24
149/30¢	15	
150	7	30
150/30¢	15	
151	7	26
152	6	26
153	6	25
154-155	6	
156	9	36
157	6	23
158	8	32
159	8	32
160	6	
160/35¢	15	
161	7 △	30
161/35¢	15	
162	8	29
162/35¢	15	
163	7	28
163/35¢	15	
164	6	
164/35¢	15	
165	6	
166	6	22
167	5	19
168	7	28
169	4	17
170	4	18
171	6	31
172	4	15
173	4	19
174	4	16
175	5	21
176	4	
177	4	10
178	4	15
179	4	16
180	4	16
181	5	
182	4	19
183	6	25
184	6 ▽	24
185	7	27
186	5	22
187	6	23
188	6	
189	6	23
190	4	17
191	5	23
192	5	20
193-194	5	
195	5	16
196	7	31
197-199	5	
200	9 ▽	27
➥Double-size		
201-210	3	
211	3	12
212-218	3	
219-224	2	
225	3	12
226-249	2	
250	3	
251-262	2	
263	3	
264-349	2	
350	3	
351-359	1	
360	3	
361-362	1	
363	3	
364-365	1	
366	4	
➥Foil cover		
367-368	1	
369	3	
370-374	1	
375	2	
375/Collector's	3	
376-379	2	
379/Double	3	
380	2	
380/Double	3	
381	2	
381/Double	3	
382	2	
382/Double	3	
383-399	2	
400	4	
401-402	3	
Ann 1	125	413
Ann 2	120	466
Ann 3	22	87
Ann 4	22	87
Ann 5	25	102
Ann 6	7	
Ann 7	12 △	48
Ann 8	8	30
Ann 9	8	29
Ann 10	9 ▽	31
Ann 11-16	4	
Ann 17	3	10
Ann 18-23	3	

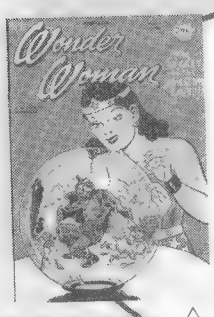
Batman
DC, 1940

0	3	
1	80000	
➥1st Catwoman		
2	15000	
3	9750	
4	7500	
5	5500	
➥1st Batmobile		
6-7	4500	
8	4000	
9	3750	
10	7500	
11	4750	
12	2900	
➥1st Batcave		
13-14	2775	
15	2625	
16	4600	
➥1st Alfred		
17-20	1650	
21-22	1275	
23	2000	
24	1275	4617
25	2050	
26-30	1275	
31-36	950	
37	1200	
38	1000	
39	950	3838
40	1140	
41-43	760	
44	1080	
45-46	760	
47	3000	
➥Batman origin		
48	965	

CBG PRICE GUIDE FAQ

Commonly-used abbreviations in the *CBG* price guide include:

Conv: Convention issue.
DF: Dynamic Forces officially licensed autographed comic.
Golden: Golden Record.
VVSS: Valiant Validated Signature Series; comics autographed on the cover by the creators and packaged with a certificate of authenticity.



△ #30

Wonder Woman

A wonderful artist

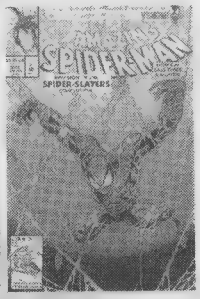
Created by William Moulton Marston, most of Wonder Woman's Golden Age adventures were illustrated by H.G. Peter, whose style defined the Amazon Princess' look for many years. Ross Andru and Mike Esposito took over as artists in the late 1950s.

image © 1948 DC

THE BOTTOM LINE

	1st Minister Blizzard								Robot cover	
	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32	33	34
NM Price	SEP 47 $450	NOV 47 $425	JAN 48 $425	MAR 48 $425	MAY 48 $425	JUL 48 $425	SEP 48 $415	NOV 48 $415	JAN 49 $415	MAR 49 $415

Amazing Spider-Man #373 ★★★★



© Marvel

Marvel
Jan 1993
Writer: David Michelinie
Pencils: Mark Bagley, Todd Smith
Inks: Randy Emberlin
Cover: Bagley, Emberlin

"The Bedlam Perspective" • 16 pp.

After facing his Spider-Slayers for the past five issues, Spider-Man finally battles Alistair Smythe.

David Michelinie put together a terrific six-part story with "Invasion of the Spider-Slayers," justifying the bi-weekly schedule. This was an enjoyable Spider-Slayer story, on a par with the classic tales of the late 1960s and early 1970s.

"The Getaway Scream!" • 6 pp.

Venom learns about Peter's parents' return and escapes to track them down.

Michelinie sets up the next two issues well with this final back-up story.

Last CGC copy: 9.8 **Then $1.25 NOW $2**

	UNSLABBED Near Mint	SLABBED CGC 9.4 NM
49	1350	
➥1st Mad Hatter		
50-51	690	
52	850	
53-54	690	
55	850	
56-57	690	
58	750	
59-61	690	
62	1250	
➥Catwoman origin		
63	575	
64	515	
65	575	
66	660	
➥vs. Joker		
67-68	515	
69	575	
70-72	515	
73	660	
74	550	
75-77	500	
78	585	
79-80	500	
81	485	
82-83	435	
84	485	
85-90	435	
91-99	400	
100	2000	
➥Anniversary issue		
101-102	400	
103	400	1615
104	400	
105	490	
106-109	400	
110	425	
111-120	290	
121	375	
➥1st Mr. Freeze		
122	225	929
123	220	
124-126	195	
127	240	
➥vs. Joker		
128	195	
129	250	
➥Robin origin		
130	195	
131	145	
132-135	130	
136	215	
➥vs. Joker		
137-145	140	
146-147	110	
148	140	
➥vs Joker		
149-150	110	
151	90	
152	100	
153	125	499
154	85	
155	300	
➥1st SA Penguin		
156-161	85	
162	85	364
163-164	85	
165	130	618
166-167	85	
168	85	345
169	90	
170	85	
171	450	
➥1st SA Riddler		
172	125	523
173-175	75	
176	85	
177	75	272
178	85	375
179	120	
➥vs. Riddler		
180	60	205
181	175	
➥1st Poison Ivy		
182-185	60	
186	70	321
187	65	271
188	40	
189	250	979
➥1st SA Scarecrow		
190	45	
191	40	
192	60	263
193	70	281
194	80	362
195-196	40	
197	100	372
➥Catwoman app.		
198	85	
199	40	190
200	100 ▲	307
➥Robin origin		
201	35	
202	35	198
203-204	30	
205	40	170
206	30	171
207	50	219
208	50	313
209-211	30	
212	30	130
213	45	
214-217	30	
218	70	247
➥Giant-size		
219	50	
220-221	30	
222	75	644
223	40	155
224-225	30	
226	30	187
227	50	403
228	40 △	157
229	30	149
230-231	30	
232	350 ▽	543
➥1st Ra's al Ghul		
233	30	
234	115 △	493
➥1st SA Two-Face		
235	17	
236	25	133
237	75 ▽	297
➥1st Reaper		
238	65	
➥100 pages		
239	17	
240	17 △	78
241	30	149
242	17	75
243	70	242
➥vs Ra's al Ghul		
244	65 ▽	208
➥vs. Ra's al Ghul		
245	70	283
246	15	
247	15	51
248	20 ▽	79
249	15 △	57
250	15	48
251	60	210
➥vs. Joker		
252	14	
253	26 ▽	110
254-255	32	
256	35 ▽	131
257	35	
258	35	145
259	32	124
260	32	166
261	32	117
262	15 △	75
263	15	60
264	9	30
265-266	9	
267	8	16
268-277	8	
278	8	18
279	8 ▽	36
280	8	
281	8	25
282	8	
283	8	20
284	8	25
285	8	32
286	12	43
➥vs. Joker		
287	9	25
288	9	34
289	9	25
290	9	
291	12	72
292-294	9	
295	8	34
296	8	29
297	8	
298	8	35
299	8	23
300	15	69
301-306	7	
307	7	20
308	7	32
309	7	
310	7	25
311	7	23
312-316	7	
317	7	28
318	7	32
319-322	7	
323	7	23
324-331	7	
332	8	
333-336	7	
337	7	21
338	7	18
339-352	7	
353	5	17
354-356	7	
357	9	
358	7	
359	7	19
360-365	7	
366	7	30
367	7	23
368	8	29
369	6	15
370	6	
371-399	5	
400	10	33
401-403	4	
404	5 ▽	20
405	6	22
406	5	15
407	5	13
408	5	16
409-416	3	
417	5	17
418	4	10
419-420	4	
421-422	3	
423	3	26
424-425	3	
426	6	21
427	6	
427/Direct	4	19
428	6	23
429	4	18
430	3	
431-435	2	
436	3	
437-441	2	
442	3	
443-456	2	
457	3	
457/Direct	4	15
458-486	2	
487	1	
488-491	3	
492	3	13
492/Silver	5	21
493	3	11
494-496	2	
497	3	11
498-500	2	
500/Collector's	4	
501-515	2	
515/Variant	4	14
516-530	2	
530/Variant	3	
531	2	
531/Variant	3	
532	2	
532/Variant	3	
533-535	2	
535/Variant	4	
536-549	2	
550	3	
550/Variant	4	
551-562	2	
563-564	3	
565-599	2	
600	4	11
601-607	2	
608	5 ▽	17
➥Jim Lee begins		
609	4	14
610	3	12
611	3	14
614	3	14
615	3	
616	3	12
617	3	10
618	3	11
619	3	11
619/2nd	3	10
620-629	2	
630	3	
631-632	2	
633	3	
634	6	
635	15	
➥Red Hood		
636-637	12	
638	11	8
638/2nd	6	
639	16	
640-641	6	
642-643	3	
644	2	
645-650	3	
1000000	4	
Ann 1	540	
Ann 2	275	
Ann 3	215	
Ann 4-5	110	
Ann 6-7	85	
Ann 8	7	
Ann 9-11	6	
Ann 12-13	5	
Ann 14-15	3	
Ann 15/Silver	4	
Ann 16-18	3	
Ann 19	4	
Ann 20	3	
Ann 21	4	
Ann 22-23	3	
Ann 24	4	
Ann 25	5	
GS 1-2	5	
GS 3	6	

Batman Adventures: Mad Love
DC, 1994

1	8 △	9

Batman: The Dark Knight
DC, 1986

1	25 △	36
➥Frank Miller series		
2	9 △	23
3	6	17
4	5 △	17

Battlestar Galactica
MARVEL, 1979

1	4 △	18
4-10	3	
11-23	2	

Beware the Creeper
DC, 1968

1	45 ▽	159
2-3	32	
4	32	122
5	32	120
6	55	259

Black Panther
MARVEL, 1977

1	12 ▽	35
2	7	27
3	5	17
4	5	
4/35¢	15	
5	5	
5/35¢	15	
6	5	
7	5	32
8	5	24
9	5	21
10	5	
11	4	22
12	4	
13	4	21
14-15	4	

Blitzkrieg
DC, 1976

1	16 △	58
2	8	34
3	6	24
4-5	6	

Bomba
DC, 1967

1	16	
2-3	8	
4	8	45
5-7	8	

Auction News

UPCOMING AUCTIONS

Recurring: Heritage Amazing Comics Auction. Conducted online only; auctions close every Sunday at 10 p.m. Central Time. **www.heritagecomics.com**

April 29: Robert Edward Auctions' April Memorabilia Auction. Online viewing and bidding begins April 10. **www.RobertEdwardAuctions.com**

May 11-13: Heritage May Comics Signature Auction. Viewing begins May 10; catalog mails April 23. **www.heritagecomics.com**

June 9: Russ Cochran Comic Art Auction #75. **(417) 256-2224** or **ec@gemstonepub.com**

Aug. 10-12: Heritage August Comics Signature Auction. Viewing begins Aug. 9; catalog mails July 23. **www.heritagecomics.com**

September: Russ Cochran Comic Art Auction #76. **(417) 256-2224** or **ec@gemstonepub.com**

Nov. 16-18: Heritage November Comics Signature Auction. Viewing begins Nov. 15; catalog mails Oct. 29. **www.heritagecomics.com**

December: Russ Cochran Comic Art Auction #77. **(417) 256-2224** or **ec@gemstonepub.com**

E-mail us with your free auction listing: www.megaguide@krause.com

	35	36	37	38	39	40	41	42	43	44	45	46	47	48
	MAY 49	JUL 49	SEP 49	NOV 49	JAN 50	MAR 50	MAY 50	JUL 50	SEP 50	NOV 50	JAN 51	MAR 51	MAY 51	JUL 51
NM Price	$415	$415	$415	$415	$415	$415	$400	$400	$400	$400	$500	$400	$400	$400
			Fights Circe	Last H.G. Peter cover				Racing cover			Origin retold			Fights robot double

PRICE GUIDE KEY: CGC INDICATORS
▲ Average price paid has gone **up THREE months in a row**
△ Average price paid has gone **up since last month**
▲ Average price paid has gone **up TWO months in a row**
▽ Average price paid has gone **down since last month**

Dramacon Vol. 1

It's fan-writer Christie's first anime con with her first boyfriend who's also her artistic partner on her first comic, but nothing goes as planned, as she deals with his flirtations and her own insecurities. Then, she meets Matt, the dark cosplaying stranger with a tragic past who's understanding and sympathetic, yet irritates her so much it's obvious love must be waiting in the wings for them.

TOKYOPOP
WRITER:
SVETLANA CHMAKOVA
ARTIST:
SVETLANA CHMAKOVA
B/W • 192 Pgs.
$9.88

Dramacon does a good job of detailing joys and pitfalls of a con experience — including gross traveling companions, buying too much stuff, and meeting a pro who gives you feedback on your work. This material may be a little too "inside" for a mass audience but it's likely to be rich wish-fulfillment for readers who are dreaming of going to their first con.

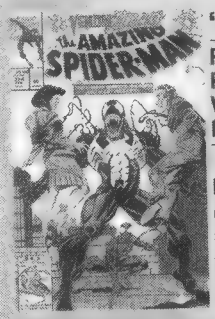
The first half is pleasant enough, but there's a turn of events that'll leave you emotionally raw, capturing perfectly the universal feeling of being young and trying to find your way. Genuinely heartfelt, it's also beautifully drawn and skillfully told.

★★★ **— S.A. Bennett**

www.tokyopop.com
ISBN: 1-59816-129-6

	UNSLABBED Near Mint	SLABBED CGC 9.4 NM
Bone		
CARTOON BOOKS, 1991		
1	80	
2	45	
3	25	
4	16	
5	12	
6-8	7	
9-13.5/Gold	4	
14-55	3	
Special 1	2	
Brave and the Bold		
DC, 1955		
1	3000	
2	1500	
3	700	
4-5	650	
6-10	500	
11-22	400	
23	500	
➥Vik. Prince origin		
24	350	
25	500	
➥1st Suicide Squad		
26	325	
27	330	
28	5000	
➥1st JLA		
29	2000	
30	1750	
31	350	
32-33	200	
34	1750	
➥1st SA Hawkman		
35-36	400	
37	250	
38-39	225	
40-41	140	
42	300	
43	350	
➥Hawkman origin		
44	260	
45-48	60	
49	60	247
50	175	
51	225	
52	125	
53	75	
54	350	887
➥1st Teen Titans		
55-56	45	
57	150	529
➥1st Metamorpho		
58	65	
59	80	
60	100	
➥1st Wonder Girl		
61	125	
➥Starman origin		
62	100	341
➥1st SA Wildcat		
63	40	
64	60	153
65-66	22	
67	65	231
➥Batman starts		
68	80	283
➥Batman Hulk parody		
69	50	200
70	50	
71	50	137
72	50	221
73	50	170
74	40	
75	60	281
76	50	205
77-78	40	
79	75	
➥Batman, Deadman		
80-82	50	
83	60	
84	50	140
85	60	273
➥N. Adams GA		
86	50	196
87	26	134
88	20	80
89	20	
90	20	76
91-92	18	
93	30	
94	18	
95	24 ▽	93
96	15	52
97-98	15	
99	22	84
100	30	98
101	15	54
102	15 ▲	69
103	12	
104	12	38
105-106	12	
107	12	33
108	12	52
109	12	
110	12	36
111	18	51
112	18 △	70
113	18	63
114	18	
115	22 ▽	78
116	18	105
117	18	
118	18	51
119	7	28
120-125	7	
126	7	27
127	6	
128	6	22
129-130	11	
131	6	
132	4	
133	5	20
134-135	4	
136	4	15
137-140	4	
141	10	
142-145	4	
146	4	15
147-179	4	
180-190	3	
191	8	
192-196	3	
197	4	
198-199	3	
200	7	22
Ann 1	6	
Caliber Presents		
CALIBER, 1989		
1	15	75
➥1st Crow		
2-7	3	
8	2	
9-24	3	
Captain America		
MARVEL, 1968		
100	210 △	661
101	55 ▽	170
102	35	147
103	35	154
104	35	135
105	35	150
106	35	113
107	35	120
108	35	114
109	45	167
➥Origin retold		
110	75 △	280
➥Steranko begins		
111	65 ▽	230
112	50 ▽	168
113	60	229
➥Avengers app.		
114	30	115
115	30	108
116	30	
117	95	367
➥1st Falcon		
118	25	
119	25	98
120	25	84
121	25	
122	25	60
123	25	93
124	25	82
125-126	20	
127	20 ▽	60
128	15	57
129	15	36
130	15	55
131	18	66
132	18	53
133	15	47
134	18	57
135	18	62
136	18	71
137	35	109
138	30	106
139	25	
140	25	78
141	25	
142	25	104
143	25	99
144	25	85
145	25	76
146	25	
147	18	70
148	16	66
149	15	45
150	25 ▽	90
151	15	
152	15 ▽	65
153	15	
154	25	92
155	25	103
156	20	106
157	10	47
158	10	46
159	10	
160	10	35
161-162	10	
163	12 ▽	55
164	12	45
165	10	
166	10	61
167	10	36
168	15	59
169	10	41
170	12	48
171	10	
172	10 ▽	42
173	15	60
174	12	52
175	10 ▽	33
176	10	49
177	8	31
178-179	8	
180	8	38
181	8	27
182	8	31
183	8	37
184	5 ▲	25
185-186	5	
187	5 ▲	21
188	8 ▽	30
189	6	30
190	6	23
191	6	
192	6	23
193	6	27
194	6	19
195	6	19
196	6 ▽	25
196/30¢	20	
197	5	
197/30¢	20	
198	6	27
198/30¢	20	
199	5	18
199/30¢	20	
200	6	24
200/30¢	20	78
201	6 ▽	23
202	4	
203	5	28
204	4	14
205	4	18
206	5	23
207	4	
208	5	23
209	5	18
210	4	16
210/35¢	15	
211	4	20
211/35¢	15	
212	4 ▽	16
212/35¢	15	
213	4	
213/35¢	15	
214	4 ▽	18
214/35¢	15	
215-217	4	
218	4	21
219-232	4	
233	4	11
234	6	28
235-240	4	
241	8	39
242-249	4	
250	4	16
251	4	
252	4	14
253-255	4	
256-271	2	
272	3	
273-275	2	
276	4	
277-281	2	
282	3	
283	2	
284	3	
285	2	
286-288	3	
289-297	2	
298	3	
299-331	2	
332	3	
333-349	2	
350	3	
351-382	2	
383	3	
384-399	2	
400	3	
401-420	2	
420/Collector's	3	
421-424	2	
425	3	
425/Variant	4	
426-443	2	
444	3	
445-447	2	
448	3	
449-454	2	
Ann 1	35	155
Ann 2	20	100
Ann 3	8	34
Ann 4	8 ▽	31
Ann 5-Ann 7	3	
Ann 8	12 ▽	28
➥Wolverine app.		
Ann 9-Ann 13	3	
Ashcan 1	1	
Special 1-2	4	

RETROVIEW
Amazing Spider-Man #374 ★★★



"Murder on Parade"

Peter and Mary Jane's day out with Peter's parents is interrupted, when Venom attacks and kidnaps the elder Parkers.

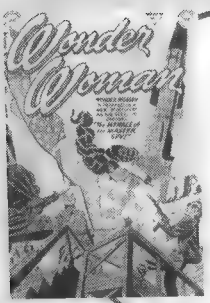
OK, at this point readers already know there's a Venom limited series on the way and may dismiss this as nothing but a lead-in to that, but it's worth picking up on its own merits.

Previously, Venom has been a one-dimensional psychopath whose primary goal has been revenge on Spider-Man for what he did to the symbiote and its host, Eddy Brock. Now, Venom has a new mission: to protect Peter's parents from the corrupting influence of Spider-Man.

Marvel
Feb 1993 • 22 pp.
Writer: David Michelinie
Pencils: Mark Bagley
Inks: Randy Emberlin
Cover: Bagley, Emberlin

© Marvel

1st CGC copy: **9.8** — **Then $1.25 NOW $3**



△ #50

image © 1951 DC

Wonder Woman

Headliner of two series

Often referred to as one of DC's "Big Three," Wonder Woman was one of only three DC characters to be the feature character in two titles at the same time, *Wonder Woman* and *Sensation*. Batman and Superman had their own titles and *Detective* and *Action Comics*, respectively.

Origin of lasso

Lie detector on cover

	49	50	51	52	53	54	55	56	57	58
	SEP 51	NOV 51	JAN 52	MAR 52	MAY 52	JUL 52	SEP 52	NOV 52	JAN 53	MAR 53
NM Price	$400	$400	$310	$310	$310	$310	$310	$310	$310	$310

THE BOTTOM LINE

Amazing Spider-Man #375 ★★★

© Marvel

Marvel
Mar 1993
Writers: David Michelinie, Tom DeFalco, et al
Pencils: Mark Bagley, et al
Inks: Randy Emberlin, et al
Cover: Bagley, Emberlin

"The Bride of Venom" • 26 pp.

Spider-Man uses information from Venom's ex-wife to track him down but leads The Wild Pack to Venom, as well.

While Venom's basic origins are recapped in nearly every appearance (after being separated from Peter Parker, the alien symbiote bonded with reporter Eddy Brock), Brock's background has never been fleshed out. This story takes care of that angle.

"True Friends" • 7 pp.

A 30th anniversary nod to *Amazing Spider-Man* #1.

"The Monster Within" • 8 pp.

"Echoes ..." • 8 pp.

Best CGC copy: **9.9** Then $3.95 NOW **$5**

I've Been Slabbed!

Steve Mortensen, Colossus Comics

9.8s on the rise

The back-issue market for modern CGC 9.8 comics has been hot. I'm finding that many of my returning customers are picking up back issues of their favorite titles to fill holes in their collections. I think a reason for this upsurge is the increased demand of rare CGC 9.8 modern comics. If the idea of a "rare" modern CGC 9.8 is new to you, keep in mind that some comics come straight off the press from the printer with production flaws, such as creases in the spines. This can make it hard to pull a VF — let alone a 9.8 — out of a stack at your local comic store. We buy in high bulk and prescreen specifically for 9.8s, which tends to make our chances of getting a 9.8 better than at an average store. The prices for these hard-to-grade books have risen considerably. Examples are *New Avengers* #7 (Aug 05), *Friendly Neighborhood Spider-Man* #1 (Dec 05), *Amazing Spider-Man* #525, and *Uncanny X-Men* #462 (Oct 05). Most are selling in the $50-$100 range. This raises the question: Is value determined by content or condition? When it comes to modern CGC books, I'd say that condition drives the market. *New Avengers* #7 is the start of the "Sentry" storyline but doesn't really introduce anything major to the series, and *Uncanny X-Men* #462 is a "House of M" tie-in, but it's one of *many* "House of M" tie-ins — so the reason for their high value is largely based on the limited availability of copies in 9.8 CGC condition. The best scenario is when you find a comic book that is both rare in terms of condition and is also highly driven by content, as in *Friendly Neighborhood Spider-Man* #1 and *Amazing Spider-Man* #525. Both are part of "The Other" storyline, which has been in high demand. Using the CGC Census is a good way to evaluate the rarity of books in certain high grades. Considering the condition factor can add an exciting twist to collecting modern comics.

This month's CGC 9.8 picks:

***Civil War* #1.** What appears to be Marvel's answer to DC's *Infinite Crisis* promises to shake things up. There is a Michael Turner sketch variant cover on this one that looks to be a good bet.

***Moon Knight* #1 Sketch Cover.** I'm just a big Moon Knight fan so I had to mention this book again this month. Marvel just announced a 1:25 sketch cover that I bet will be a hot item. Such recent sketch covers as *Amazing Spider-Man* #528, *Ms. Marvel* #1, and *Ultimate Wolverine vs. Hulk* #1 and #2 have proven to be tough to grade in CGC 9.8 and are in great demand from collectors.

***Amazing Spider-Man* #530.** I believe this is the second appearance of the new costume. That and the fact that the issue ties into the "Civil War" should help its value. Overall, I think the new costume has had good response from collectors and I think these early issues of the costume will prove to be nice comics to have in CGC 9.8.

***Ultimate Fantastic Four* #30.** This is the return of the Marvel Zombies. The undead are back after a great five-issue run by Robert Kirkman. The series has sold out of many of its printings, and the story was a fresh take on an alternate Marvel universe.

***52* #1-4.** The first four weeks of *52* should prove to be, not only good reading, but perhaps a good collectible value once the story gets further along. The "One Year Later" storylines have also sold out of many of my local comics stores and may also prove to be worth grading in CGC 9.8. *Infinite Crisis* appears to have lived up to expectations, and DC is on a roll with its titles.

***Steve Mortensen** owns Colossus Comics (**www.colossuscomics.com**), which offers a CGC 9.8 subscription service and CGC 9.8 pre-orders for new comics. He can be reached at **steve@colossuscomics.com**.*

	UNSLABBED Near Mint	SLABBED CGC 9.4 NM
Captain Atom		
CHARLTON, 1965		
78	40	153
79	25	90
80-81	25	
82	25	111
83	25	
84	25	93
85	25	95
86	20	
87	20	57
88	20	
89	20	98
Captain Marvel		
MARVEL, 1968		
1	60 ▽	244
2	18 ▽	74
3	18	75
4	24	95
5	15	66
6	30 ▽	87
7	15	60
8	15	65
9	25	102
10	15	59
11	15	
12	15 ▽	55
13	15	56
14-15	15	
16	25	130
17-18	22	
19	22	89
20	22	
21	22	88
22-24	22	
25 ➥Thanos War starts	25	84
26	25	99
27	25 ▲	63
28	30	115
29	16	66
30	12	56
31	16	81
32	12	40
33	12	68
34	6	44
35-37	3	
38	5	23
39-43	3	
44	3	28
44/30¢	20	
45	3	
45/30¢	20	
46-47	3	
48	9	38
49	3	
50	10	152
51	4	10
52	3 △	15
52/35¢	15 △	15
53-54	3	
55	5	20
56	3	
57	6	25
58-62	3	
Captain Marvel Adventures		
FAWCETT, 1941		
1	27500	
2	3500	
3	1800	
4	1200	
5	1050	
6-7	750	
8-10	675	
11-15	590	
16-17	550	
18 ➥1st Mary Marvel	1800	
19-20	500	
21-22	400	
23 ➥1st Mr. Mind	610	
24-40	225	
41	190	
42	163	
43-47	125	
48	125	1878
49	125	
50	125	493
51	125 △	380
52-109	125	
110-120	80	
121 ➥Cap Marvel origin	115	
122-150	80	
Cerebus the Aardvark		
AARDVARK-VANAHEIM, 1977		
0	4	
0/Gold	6	
1	700	152
1/Counterfeit	60	
2	150	
3	90	259
4	75	
5	50	
6	35	57
7	20	58
8	15	45
9	15	43
10	15	56
11	12	50
12	10 △	41
13-14	10	
15	10	44
16-19	10	
20	10	27
21	10	37
22	10	
23-26	6	
27	6	18
28-29	6	
30	6	16
31	6	12
32-40	5	
41-50	4	
51	6	
52-57	4	
58-60	3	
61-62	4	
63-100	3	
101-299	2	
300	4	
Chamber of Chills		
HARVEY, 1951		
1	350	
2-4	275	
5-9	250	
10-12	225	
13	225	352
14-19	225	
20-21	200	
22	200 ▽	535
23-25	200	
26	175	
Chamber of Darkness		
MARVEL, 1968		
1 ➥Becomes Monsters on the Prowl	60	184
2	35	111
3	30	
4 ➥BWS Conan tryout	60	193
5	30	103
6	30	
7	30	95
8	20	
1/Special	20 ▽	65

New logo

Origin of Wonder Woman's earrings and sandals

3-D story

1st Angle Man

	59	60	61	62	63	64	65	66	67	68	69	70	71	72
	MAY 53	JUL 53	SEP 53	NOV 53	JAN 54	FEB 54	APR 54	MAY 54	JUL 54	AUG 54	OCT 54	NOV 54	JAN 55	FEB 55
NM Price	$310	$310	$240	$240	$240	$240	$240	$240	$240	$240	$240	$240	$190	$190

PRICE GUIDE KEY: OTHER GRADES **Unslabbed (loose) Very Fine/Near Mint** is **5/6** (83%) of the unslabbed NM price above **Fine (F)** is **1/3** (33%) of NM **Very Good (VG)** is **1/5** (20%) of NM **Very Fine (VF)** is **2/3** (67%) of NM **Good (G)** is **1/8** (12.5%) of NM

11th Cat Vol. 1

While on a journey through dangerous dark woods to find the staff she needs to become a full wizard, wizard-in-training Rika discovers the powerful black wish stone and its guardian, the mouthy Nomi. Together, they attempt to rescue a princess who's been kidnapped by The Demon King.

ICE KUNION
WRITER:
MIKYUNG KIM
ARTIST:
MIKYUNG KIM
B/W • 180 Pgs.
$10.95

It's a rambling, good-natured fantasy that's far more fairy tale than the all too common epic fantasy. It has pretty, highly polished art and ultra-cute characters. Being oh so good (her one character flaw: She's clumsy), Rika is dull, as is her juvenile sparring with childhood friend Eugen, who's a friend who's a boy but not a boyfriend. (Yeah, right.)

Far more interesting is her partner Nomi, who isn't a typical magical "slave." She's remarkably independent and earthy (eating everything in sight and at one point requiring toilet paper) for a spirit. As in all the Ice Kunion titles, there are back-up features including an interview with the creators, character bios, and a sample chapter from another of the publisher's titles.

★★★ **— S.A. Bennett**

www.koreanmanwha.com
ISBN: 8-95274-461-6

Champions
MARVEL, 1975

	UNSLABBED Near Mint	SLABBED CGC 9.4 NM
1	15 △	49
2	6	30
3	6	29
4	5 ▽	24
5	5 ▽	30
5/30¢	20	
6	4	37
6/30¢	20	
7	4	31
7/30¢	20	
8	4	27
9	4	
10	4	26
11-13	4	
14	4	26
14/35¢	15	
15	4	
15/35¢	15	
16-17	4	

Conan the Barbarian
MARVEL, 1970

1	160 ▽	601
➥1st comics Conan		
2	55	196
3	72 △	262
4	26	112
5	30	129
6	26	111
7	26	92
8	30	117
9	20	81
10	35	129
➥Giant-size		
11	35	138
➥Giant-size		
12	15	86
13	20	86
14	20	87
15	17 ▽	72
16	20	66
17	17	74
18	20	89
19	17	85
20	27	111
21	20	83
22	20	72
23	20 ▽	73
➥1st Red Sonja		
24	20 ▽	76
25	10	44
26	8	33
27	8	43
28	8	35
29	8	39
30	8	31
31	7	30
32	7	26
33	7 ▽	22
34	7	43
35	7	30
36	9	43
37	9 ▲	42
38	9	30
39	7	
40	7	21
41	7	26
42	7	30
43	7	
44	7	35
45	7	31
46	7	
47	7	20
48	6	19
49	6	22
50	6	
51	5	17
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53	5	21
54	5	
55	5	14
56	5	17
57	5	15
58	5	20
59	5	27
60	5	17
61	5	22
61/30¢	20	
62	5	17
62/30¢	20	
63	5 △	12
63/30¢	20	
64	5	
64/30¢	20	
65	5	16
65/30¢	20	
66	5	21
67	5	16
68	5	
69	5	17
70	5 △	23
71-74	5	
75	5	11
75/35¢	15	
76	5	15
76/35¢	15	
77	5	21
77/35¢	15	
78	5	
78/35¢	15	
79	5	
79/35¢	15	
80-82	5	
83	5	24
84-93	5	
94-96	4	
97	4	16
98	4	
99	4	16
100	6	20
101-274	2	
275	3	
Ann 1	10	39
Ann 2	6	22
Ann 3	6	26
Ann 4-12	2	
Special 1	3	

Creatures of the Id
CALIBER, 1990

1	11 △	37

Crisis on Infinite Earths
DC, 1985

1	5 ▲	16
2	4	10
3	4	17
4	3	12
5	5	19
6	3	11
7	5 △	18
8	5 △	20
9	3	12
10	3	19
11	3	11
12	3	13

Danger Trail
DC, 1950

1	875	
2	600	
3	1250	
➥Scarce		
4-5	385	

Daredevil
MARVEL, 1964

-1	2	
1	3000	11647
➥1st Daredevil		
2	750	2988
3	550	1934
4	400	1403
5	300 ▽	1031
6	225	814
7	675	6567
➥1st red costume		
8	135 △	656
9	135 △	397
10	135	1034
11	85	361
12	85	
13	85	459
14	85 ▽	292
15	85	268
16	120	1129
➥Spider-Man app.		
17	120	605
➥Spider-Man app.		
18	70	248
➥1st Gladiator		
19	60	284
20	55 ▽	266
21	50	
22	50	182
23	50	230
24	50	183
25	50	166
26	50	272
27	50 ▽	203
28	45	158
29	45	177
30	45 ▽	201
31	40	190
32	40	154
33	40	149
34	40	166
35	40	147
36	40	158
37	40 ▽	199
38	40	219
39	40 ▽	148
40	40	109
41	40 ▽	98
42	40 ▽	106
43	45 △	204
44	30 ▽	96
45	30 ▽	100
46	30	126
47	30 ▽	108
48	30 ▽	146
49	30	113
50	33	148
51	33 ▽	120
52	33	118
53	20 ▽	106
54	20	163
55	20	167
56	20 △	91
57	20	106
58	20	141
59	20 ▽	89
60	20	90
61	20	72
62	20 ▽	88
63	20	90
64	20	
65	20	75
66	20	96
67	20	86
68	20	81
69	20 ▽	103
70	20	76
71	20	
72	17	82
73	17	63
74	17 △	50
75	17 ▽	64
76	17 ▽	66
77	17	114
78	17 ▽	63
79	17	71
80	17 ▽	75
81	25	139
➥Giant-size		
82	17	81
83	17	73
84	14	66
85	14 ▽	64
86	14	
87	14	59
88	14 △	51
89	14	60
90	14 ▲	64
91	14 ▲	71
92	14	62
93	14 ▽	75
94	14	100
95	14 ▽	66
96	14 ▽	58
97	14	55
98	14 ▽	52
99	14	73
100	30	118
➥Origin recap		
101	8	63
102	8 ▽	49
103	8	63
104	8	59
105	8 ▽	64
106	8	31
107	8 △	54
108	8	33
109	8	62
110	8	40
111	8 △	40
112	8	36
113	8	38
114	8	45
115	8	37
116	8	
117	8 △	31
118	8	33
119	8 △	23
120	8	28
121	8	30
122	8	
123	8	24
124	8	38
125	8	35
126	8	36
127	8	34
128	8	24
129	8	24
130	8	
131	75 ▽	218
➥1st Bullseye		
132	15 ▽	75
132/30¢	20	
133	6	33
133/30¢	20	
134	6	25
134/30¢	20	
135	6 ▽	23
135/30¢	20	
136	6	26
136/30¢	20	
137	6	28
138	6	29
139	6	23
140	6	26
141	6	60
142	6	24
143	6	27
144	6	29
145	6	31
146	6	29
146/35¢	15	
147	6	
147/35¢	15	
148	6	14

RETROVIEW
Amazing Spider-Man #376 ★★1/2

"Guilt by Association"

Cardiac suspects he has a connection to Styx and Stone.

David Michelinie and Steven Grant produce a nice two-part story that reads like an interlude before "Maximum Carnage" gets under way.

More of Cardiac's origins are revealed this issue, but it's somewhat unclear why he suspects a connection to Styx and Stone. That will be revealed next issue.

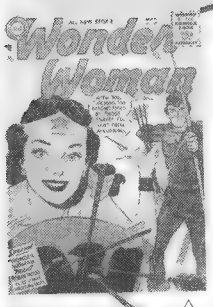
So much time is spent with Cardiac, Styx, and Stone, that Spider-Man is almost left out. Almost, but not quite, as the Peter's parents subplot continues moving forward this issue.

Marvel
Apr 1993 • 22 pp.
Writers: David Michelinie, Steven Grant
Pencils: Jeff Johnson
Inks: Panosian, Milgrom
Cover: Bagley, Barberin

© Marvel

Price then $1.25 **NOW $4**

Wonder Woman



△ #82

Meeting a dashing bowman

As recounted by Michelle Nolan in *CBG* #1614 (Mar 06), Wonder Woman met Sherwood Forest's primary protector, Robin Hood, twice in the 1950s, in #82 (May 56) and #94 (Nov 57). The adventures attempted to tie into the popularity of Robin's TV show.

image © 1956 DC

Comics Code begins

Shrunken WW

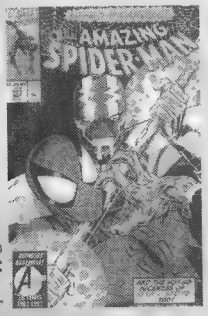
Origin of invisible plane

Meets Robin Hood

	73	74	75	76	77	78	79	80	81	82
	APR 55	MAY 55	JUL 55	AUG 55	OCT 55	NOV 55	JAN 56	FEB 56	APR 56	MAY 56
NM Price	$190	$190	$190	$190	$190	$190	$190	$155	$155	$155

THE BOTTOM LINE

Amazing Spider-Man #377 ★★



© Marvel

Marvel
May 1993 • 22 pp.
Writers: David Michelinie, Steven Grant
Pencils: Jon Johnson
Inks: Randy Emberlin
Cover: Bagley, Emberlin

"Dust to Dust"

Cardiac learns the origins of Styx and Stone and is thwarted in his attempts to destroy Styx by using Spider-Man.

This two-parter could (and probably should) have been a limited series, giving more space to each character's origin story. The few panels devoted to Cardiac last issue and the equally sparse treatment this issue for Styx and Stone don't give any of them enough of a backstory.

Again, Spider-Man is relegated to supporting character status in his own title. That's hardly fair. Ah, well, it'll all be fixed in the next regular issue. Read *Spider-Man Unlimited* #1 and *Web of Spider-Man* #101 first.

Add CGC copy: **9.8** **Then $1.25 NOW $3**

	UNSLABBED Near Mint	SLABBED CGC 9.4 NM
148/35¢	15	
149	6	29
150	6	30
151	6	22
152	6	28
153	6	22
154	6	
155	6	27
156	6	25
157	6	28
158	50 △	135
➥Frank Miller starts		
159	22	61
160	17	49
161	17 ▽	40
162	9	41
163	18	73
164	11	28
165	11	52
166	11	32
167	11	27
168	75 ▽	193
➥1st Elektra		
169	16	48
170	10 ▽	26
171	12	59
172	7	38
173	7	19
174	7 △	30
175	7 △	26
176	7 ▽	32
177	7	26
178	6	23
179	6 ▽	23
180	6 ▲	22
181	15 ▽	29
➥Elektra dies		
182	7 ▲	22
183	7 △	23
184	6 △	22
185	5 ▽	16
186	6 △	20
187	5	19
188	5	24
189	5	17
190	5	17
191	6	12
192	3	15
193	3	14
194	3	10
195	3	
196	6 △	20
197	3	17
198-199	3	
200	3	20
201-204	3	
205	4	
206-215	3	
216	3	10
217-218	3	
219	3	15
220-226	3	
227	4 ▽	16
➥FM Born Again		
228	3	
229	3	12
230-231	3	
232	3	19
233-237	3	
238	3	11
239-247	3	
248	4	
249	4	15
250	3	
251	5	
252	4	
253	3	
254	6	28
➥1st Typhoid Mary		
255-257	3	
258	4	
259-287	3	
288	3	30
289	3	
290	3	12
291-295	3	
296-299	2	
300	3	15
301-303	2	
304	3	
305-311	2	
312	3	
313-318	2	
319	5	
320-321	2	
321/Variant	3	
322-324	2	
325	3	
326-349	2	
350	3	
350/Variant	4	
351-374	2	
375	3	
376-379	2	
380	3	
Ann 1	50 ▽	177
Ann 2-3	9	
Ann 4	8	33
Ann 5	4	
Ann 6-10	3	
Ann 1997	4	

Daredevil
MARVEL, 1998

½	5	
1	7 △	32
1/Ltd.	50	
1/Variant	9 ▽	36
2/A	5	13
2/B	5	
3	4	14
4	4	17
5	4	
5/A	5	19
6	3	9
7	4	
8-15	3	
16	5	
16/Unlimited	6	
17	3	
17/Unlimited	5	13
➥Newsstand variant		
18-20	3	
20/Unlimited	5	
21	3	
21/Unlimited	5	
22	3	
22/Unlimited	5	
23	3	
23/Unlimited	5	
24-25	3	
26	3	11
27-31	3	
32	3	11
33-36	3	
36/No #	5	
➥Newsstand; no #		
37	3	9
37/Unlimited	5	13
➥Newsstand variant		
37/No #	4	
➥Newsstand; no #		
38-56	3	
57	4	
58-64	3	
65	4	
66-82	3	

Day of Vengeance
DC, 2005

1	10	
1/2nd	5	
1/3rd	6	
2	5	
2/2nd	4	
3-6	3	

DC Comics Presents
DC, 1978

1	9	35
2	7	
3	4	
4-5	2	
6	6	
7-9	2	
9/Whitman	6	
10-25	2	
26	14	50
➥1st New Teen Titans		
27	3	
28-41	2	
42-43	1	
44	2	
45-46	1	
47	17	26
➥1st Masters Universe		
48-50	1	
51	6	
52	3	
53-71	1	
72	2	
73-76	1	
77-78	3	
79-84	1	
85	6	
➥Moore Swamp Thing		
86-92	1	
93	2	
94-97	1	
Ann 1-4	3	

CBG Trendwatcher

John Tinkess, Another Dimension

HEATING UP

Despite harsh winter weather and the absence of some of our best-selling titles (*Infinite Crisis, All Star Batman,* and *All-Star Superman*), February sales continued to be very strong for us, well above last year's pace. *Justice* #4 was our best-selling book of the month, and the long-awaited return of *Astonishing X-Men* finished a close second. Sales of *Marvel Zombies* have been growing at a rapid pace, and *Ultimate Wolverine vs. Hulk* seems to have sparked renewed interest in the entire Ultimate line.

With the jump to "One Year Later" looming, DC managed by double-shipping titles like *Green Lantern* and *Supergirl* to catch up some books that had fallen behind schedule, so, while the wait for *Infinite Crisis* threatened to drive fans crazy, there were plenty of other great DC books to keep them busy. Besides *Supergirl* and *GL*, we saw increased sales in virtually all of DC's series this month, as many readers wanted to see how how all of the storylines would be wrapped up before "One Year Later."

COOLING DOWN

The biggest disappointment this month had to be the accelerated shipping schedule of *Red Sonja*. Between the main series, the *Red Sonja vs. Thulsa Doom* mini-series, and other one-shots, there were one or two new Red Sonja books every week, and sales have suffered because of it. When it first started, *Red Sonja* was our best selling non-Marvel-or-DC series, outselling even *Conan*. Long delays between the first few issues hampered sales to a degree, but now the current weekly schedule has become too much for many fans to handle. Sales have plummeted for us on the series, and I'm not sure if anything can be done to get those readers back.

House Picks

Wonder(ful) recommendations

1. ***Wonder Woman* (1st series) #178-203 (Oct 68-Dec 72).** Denny O'Neil and Mike Sekowsky's late 1960s revamp included a mod new costume and a mentor, I-Ching. DC would do well to reprint these.
2. ***Wonder Woman* (2nd series) #85-100 (Apr 94-Jul 95).** Probably the best modern era run in my opinion, by William Messner-Loebs and Mike Deodato. Collected in *Wonder Woman: The Contest* and *Wonder Woman: The Challenge of Artemis.*
3. ***Wonder Woman* (2nd series) #1-24 (Feb 87-Hol 88).** After *Crisis on Infinite Earths*, Wonder Woman is re-established in the DC universe with story and art by George Pérez.
4. ***Wonder Woman Archives.*** Collecting the original 1940s Wonder Woman stories.
5. ***Wonder Woman Season One* DVD.** OK, this isn't a comic book, but, at the time, the *Wonder Woman* TV series was one of the most faithful adaptations of comics to another medium, and Lynda Carter was (and always will be) Wonder Woman to an entire generation of fans.

John Tinkess *runs* ***Another Dimension*** *in Calgary, Alberta. He can be reached at* ***comics@another-dimension.com*** *or* ***(403) 283-7078.***

Fights Angle Man ▼ — Flying saucer cover ▼ — Meets Robin Hood ▼

	83 JUL 56	84 AUG 56	85 OCT 56	86 NOV 56	87 JAN 57	88 FEB 57	89 APR 57	90 MAY 57	91 JUL 57	92 AUG 57	93 OCT 57	94 NOV 57	95 JAN 58	96 FEB 58
NM Price	$155	$155	$155	$155	$155	$155	$155	$155	$120	$120	$120	$120	$120	$120

PRICE GUIDE KEY:
OTHER CGC GRADES

Slabbed CGC 9.8 (NM/M) is **3 times** the CGC 9.4 price above
CGC 9.0 (VF/NM) is **2/5 (40%)** of CGC 9.4
CGC 9.6 (NM+) is **1.5 times** CGC 9.4
CGC 8.0 (VF) is **1/5 (20%)** of CGC 9.4

Fables #44

In the last issue, the worst fears of the European Fables came true, when a Middle Eastern Fable released a powerful D'Jinn. More commonly known as a Genie, the D'Jinn is the Fables equivalent of a nuclear bomb. As this clash of cultures turns into war, the key question is: Can the D'Jinn be stopped before he destroys Manhattan's Fabletown? It was previously revealed that The North Wind, grandfather to Snow White's litter of children, welcomed an opportunity for what he would consider to be sport, but that their conflict would destroy the Mundy world: the world of the mundane readers.

DC/VERTIGO
WRITER:
BILL WILLINGHAM
ARTIST:
MARK BUCKINGHAM
COLOR • 32 PGS.
$2.75

Besides having a clever story, this is a key issue, because it establishes the series as being part of current, real-world events. While we've always known that the setting was modern, *Fables* are ageless. Some previous story arcs (like the time when Jack from the Beanstalk made a trilogy of movies in Hollywood) have covered many years. As is evidenced by the cover, part of this issue takes place in U.S. Coalition-occupied Baghdad.

★★★½ — Michael Tierney

www.dccomics.com

	UNSLABBED Near Mint	SLABBED CGC 9.4 NM
DC Countdown		
DC, 2005		
1	6	
1/2nd	3	
DC 100 Page Super Spectacular		
DC, 1971		
4	175	
5	350	
➥Scarce		
6	150	585
7	60	
8-9	75	
10-13	60	
14	45	145
15	45 ▽	71
16	45 △	167
17	45	
18	30	117
19	24	98
20	35	144
21-22	22	
DC Special		
DC, 1968		
1	60	148
2	50	
3	35	
4	25	128
5	20	79
6	20	70
7	20	
8	20	148
9	20	41
10	20	60
11	20	110
12	20	66
13-14	20	
15	16	70
16	10	35
17-26	10	
27	10	29
28	10	39
29	12	53
Deadly Hands of Kung Fu		
MARVEL, 1974		
1	30	98
2	8	
3-5	6	
6-10	5	
11-19	4	
20	7	
21	3	28
22-30	3	
31	6	25
32-33	3	
Special 1	4	
Defenders		
MARVEL, 1972		
1	90 △	312
2	35 ▽	114
3	30	115
4	26	103
5	26	81
6	16	65
7	16	51
8	25	97
9	16	65
10	55 △	230
➥Avengers War		
11	15	64
12	9	32
13	9	35
14	10	33
15	10	39
16	10	43
17	7	
18	7	30
19	7	
20	7	22
21	6 ▽	24
22	6	27
23	6	21
24	6	
25	7	26
26-29	7	
30	4	12
31-32	4	
33	4	13
34	5	22
34/30¢	20	
35	5	
35/30¢	20	
36	5	60
36/30¢	20	
37	5	5
37/30¢	20	
38	5	24
38/30¢	5	
39	4	
40	4 △	17
41	4	
42	4	18
43-45	4	
46	4	17
47	4	
48	5	22
48/35¢	15	
49	4	
49/35¢	15	
50	4	
50/35¢	15	
51	4	
51/35¢	15	
52	4	
52/35¢	15	
53	4	
54	4	17
55-56	4	
57	4	20
58	4	
59	4	14
60-62	4	
63	5	21
64	4	
65	4	14
66-71	4	
72	4	16
73-92	4	
93-99	3	
100	3	13
101-152	2	
Ann 1	12	40
Detective Comics		
DC, 206		
0	3	
1	80000	
2	18250	
3	10800	
4-5	6850	
6-7	4450	
8	6500	
9-17	4350	
18	5000	
19	4150	
20	6300	
21	3250	
22	3950	
23-26	3250	
27	225000	
➥1st Batman		
27/2nd	9	36
28	25000	
➥2nd Batman		
29	35000	
➥3rd Batman		
30	7500	
31	27500	
➥Batman vs. the Monk		
32	6000	
33	50000	
➥Batman origin		
34	7500	
35	10000	
36-37	6500	
38	57500	
➥1st Robin		
39	6000	
40	6500	
41	4000	
42-45	3000	
46-50	2000	
51-57	1750	
58	4750	
➥1st Penguin		
59	2000	
60	1750	
61	1500	
62	2250	
63	1750	
64	5000	
➥1st Boy Commandos		
65	2250	
66	4000	
➥1st Two-Face		
67	2000	
68-69	1750	
70-71	1500	
72-75	1250	
76	1500	
77-79	1000	
80	1250	
81-83	1000	
84	900	
85	1250	
86-90	900	
91	1000	
92-95	800	
96	800	2339
97-98	800	
99	950	
100	1000	
101	700	
102	950	
103-108	625	
109	850	
110-113	625	
114	800	
115-117	625	
118	825	
119	600	
120	800	
➥Penguin app		
121	600	
122	1225	
123	600	
124	800	
125-127	600	
128	800	
129-130	600	
131-134	525	
135	525	3463
136	525	
137	675	
138	925	
➥Robotman origin		
139	500	
140	4000	
➥1st Riddler		
141	575	
142	1250	
➥2nd Riddler		
143-148	575	
149	675	
150	550	
151	600	
152-155	525	
156	625	
157-160	500	
161-167	525	
168	3750	
➥Joker origin		
169-170	500	
171	700	
172-176	500	
177-179	400	
180	450	
181-186	400	
187	425	
188-189	400	
190	600	
191-192	400	
193	450	
194-199	400	
200	575	
201-202	400	
203	450	
204	400	
205	575	
206-210	400	
211	450	
212	400	
213	525	
214-224	375	
225	4500	
➥1st Manhunter		
226	1500	
227-229	500	
230	550	
231	400	
232	300	
233	1250	
➥1st Batwoman		
234	325	
235	600	
236	350	
237-240	300	
241-260	250	
261-264	200	
265	325	
266	200	
267	250	
268-270	200	
271	200	854
272	175	
273	200	
274-280	150	
281-291	125	
292	125	706
293-297	125	
298	200	
299-305	100	
306	100	403
307-309	100	
310	100	249
311	200	
➥1st Catman		
312-320	100	

For issues not listed here, check our **STANDARD CATALOG OF COMIC BOOKS**. The largest book about comics ever, it includes prices and details for more than 155,000 comic books.

Or look for our portable version, the **COMIC BOOK CHECKLIST & PRICE GUIDE**.

Krause publishes the ONLY books that list Near Mint prices for comic books!

Get them from your local retailer or order them from www.krausebooks.com!

RETROVIEW
Amaz. Spider-Man Ann. #27 ★★★

Marvel
1993
Writers: Various
Pencils: Various
Inks: Various
Cover: John Romita

"Prepare Yourself for Annex" • 25 pp.
Spider-Man meets Annex, a new hero who can download weaponry electronically.

Marvel's 1993 annuals introduced a bunch of new characters to the Marvel universe, most of whom have long since faded from memory. At least, Annex wasn't as big a joke as was Battling Bantam, introduced in *Captain America Annual.*

"Dead Reckoning" (Solo and Black Cat) • 8 pp.

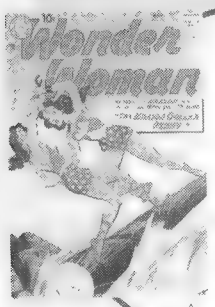
"The Lizard Must Be Destroyed" • 8 pp.

"Estrangements and Reunions" (J. Jonah Jameson and Man-Wolf) • 8 pp.

"Maximum Carnage Cover Gallery" • 5 pp.

© Marvel

Near Mint copy 9.8 **Then $2.95 NOW $3**



Wonder Woman

A new team for the Amazon

With the Silver Age gearing up, DC replaced original *Wonder Woman* artist H.G. Peter with the team of Ross Andru and Mike Esposito, who also worked on many other DC titles of the day from *Superman* to *Star Spangled War Stories.*

△ #98

image © 1958 DC

THE BOTTOM LINE

	97	98	99	100	101	102	103	104	105	106
	APR 58	MAY 58	JUL 58	AUG 58	OCT 58	NOV 58	JAN 59	FEB 59	APR 59	MAY 59
NM Price	$120	$120	$120	$120	$90	$90	$90	$90	$600	$80

Andru and Esposito art begins

Fights giants

Origin retold

Amazing Spider-Man #378 ★★

© Marvel

"Maximum Carnage, Pt. 3: Demons on Broadway"

While Spider-Man recovers from his injuries, Venom takes on Carnage and his allies.

All of the Spider-titles, plus the newly created *Spider-Man Unlimited*, were used in the 14-part "Maximum Carnage" crossover that took up three months of 1993.

With 14 chapters, there's plenty of room for set-up — in fact, *too* much room, as this issue spends far too much time with the characters discussing their problems and not enough actually attempting to stop Carnage and his crew's killing spree across New York City.

Marvel
Jun 1993 • 23 pp.
Writer: David Michelinie
Pencils: Mark Bagley
Inks: Randy Emberlin
Cover: Bagley, Emberlin

Paid CGC copy: 9.8 **Then $1.25 NOW $4**

	UNSLABBED Near Mint	SLABBED CGC 9.4 NM
321	100	367
322-323	100	
324	100	408
325	100	411
326	100	
327	225	755
➥New Bat symbol		
328	175	
➥Alfred dies		
329-330	75	
331	65	
332	115	437
➥Joker		
333-340	60	
341	75	
342-349	60	
350	60	157
351	60	
352	60	267
353	75	339
354-355	75	
356	75	237
357	75	162
358	75	
359	350	1267
➥1st Batgirl		
360	65	239
361	65	238
362	65	213
363	100	354
➥2nd Batgirl		
364	60	258
365	90	379
366-368	60	
369	75	
370	45	168
371	80	295
➥Batmobile		
372	50	
373	50	183
374-375	50	
376	50	166
377	65	249
378	50	115
379	50	
380	50	160
381-382	40	
383	40	142
384	40	149
385	40	142
386	40	
387	75	188
388	50	211
389	35	150
390	35	
391-393	25	
394	35	121
395	125	505
396	35	135
397	35	
398	30 ▽	132
399	30	
400	175	920
➥1st Man-Bat		
401	30	
402	55	214
403	35	142
404	35	136
405-406	30	
407	30	175
408	40	173
409	40	162
410	40	144
411	30	243
➥1st Talia		
412	25	116
413	25	
414	25	112
415	25	104
416	25	
417	25	101
418	25	94
419	25	85
420	25	82
421	25	62
422	25	121
423	25	
424	25	83
425	20 △	69
426	20	
427	20	61
428	15	49
429	15	49
430	15	41
431	15	42
432	15	46
433	15	51
434	15	51
435	15	46
436	15 ▽	34
437	20	91
438	28	107
➥100-page issue		
439	28	142
➥100-page issue		
440	28	130
➥100-page issue		
441	28	138
➥100-page issue		
442	28	142
➥100-page issue		
443	28	135
➥100-page issue		
444	28	160
➥100-page issue		
445	28	161
➥100-page issue		
446	12	51
447	8	30
448	8	34
449-450	8	
451	6	23
452-453	6	
454	6 ▽	29
455	6	
456	9	36
457	9	37
458	6	27
459	6	20
460	6	27
461	6	22
462	6	
463	45	30
➥1st Calculator		
464	6	
465	9	34
466	9 ▽	31
467	9	39
468	9	26
469	5	30
470	5 △	22
471	8	33
472	8	49
473	8	37
474	15	56
➥1st new Deadshot		
475	15	84
476	15	59
477	8	33
478	8	33
479	8	23
480	5	20
481	7	
482	5	
483	8	37
484	5	16
485-486	4	
487	4	20
488	4	
489	4	21
490	4	27
491	4	
492	4	20
493-499	4	
500	5	17
501-503	4	
504	6 ▽	21
505	4	15
506-516	4	
517	4	13
518-523	4	

CBG Trendwatcher

Michael Tierney, Collector's Edition

This year was almost the year without a winter in Arkansas. But Mother Nature was just saving all the cold weather up for one big ice storm that closed us down for several days in the middle of the month. For once, the weatherman's dire predictions came true on schedule, which turned out to be a good thing. After the panicked masses cleared all the grocers' shelves of break and milk, the last stop for many comics collectors was for something to read before they went into hibernation. The storm panic was great for my business. Well, break even, when you factor in the sales days lost. And that's great.

And the weather wasn't the only thing stirring up a storm in February. DC's super-strong *Infinite Crisis* continued to churn up sales, which rolled on into DC's launch of "One Year Later." Right now, it seems that DC can do no wrong, as its sales run wild.

Marvel is also seeing an increase in sales. *Marvel Zombies* is eating through printing after printing, and the *Origin* follow-up story in *Wolverine* has been popular. The launch of "Civil War" in *Amazing Spider-Man* #529, which featured the debut of Spider-Man's new yellow and red costume, exceeded high expectations.

As can be seen by my key sales, variants are a hot commodity, and sketch covers are the hottest — regardless of whether they're limited. This was proven by the number of *Infinite Crisis* customers who continued to buy multiple copies of the second printings of *Infinite Crisis* #3 and #4 with sketch covers.

Serenity continues to be a sales phenomenon. Even though the movie has already gone through the DVD release, the comic-book series keeps selling. All those multiple sales on #1 aren't a typo. My error of ordering too heavily was one of the best mistakes I've ever made. People don't just snatch the first printings of #1, they usually buy the entire set. Sometimes, they take every cover of each issue — all nine!

Despite the ice freezing over the roads and bridges, it was a hot month for comics.

Key Sales (all unslabbed):

Amazing Spider-Man #298 VF $24.50
Amazing Spider-Man #300 VG $55
Astonishing X-Men #1 Group Variant NM $49.50
Astonishing X-Men #1 Constipated Wolverine Variant NM $18
Detective Comics #357 FN+ $22
Detective Comics #372 FN+ $22.50
Detective Comics #403 VF- $26
Flash #112 FN+ $29.50
JLA Classified #1 NM $20
Mystery in Space #73 VG+ $22
Serenity #1 NM $12 (21 copies)
Showcase #57 VF $55.75
Spectre #4 VG- $15.75
Superman #75 (bagged) NM $20
Superman's Pal Jimmy Olsen #135 VF- $37
Tales of the Unexpected #82 (last Space Ranger) VG $14
Uncanny X-Men #99 FN $27
Uncanny X-Men #120 VF $16
Wonder Woman #219 (1st printing) NM $15 (three copies)

House Picks

Wonder(ful) recommendations

1. ***Wonder Woman* (Vol. 2) #219** (It's a killer.)
2. ***Wonder Woman: Eyes of the Gorgon* TPB**
3. ***Wonder Woman: Down Among the Dead* TPB**
4. ***Wonder Woman: The Hiketeia***
5. ***Wonder Woman: The Contest***

Michael Tierney *runs* ***Collector's Edition*** *in North Little Rock and* ***The Comic Book Store*** *in Little Rock, Ark. He can be reached at* ***cbsrock@swbell.net*** *or* ***(501) 791-4222.***

Origin of costume — Wonder Girl appears — Mer-Boy appears — Holiday Girls appear — Mer-Man appears

	107 JUL 59	108 AUG 59	109 OCT 59	110 NOV 59	111 JAN 60	112 FEB 60	113 APR 60	114 MAY 60	115 JUL 60	116 AUG 60	117 OCT 60	118 NOV 60	119 JAN 61	120 FEB 61
NM Price	$80	$80	$80	$80	$70	$70	$70	$70	$70	$70	$70	$70	$70	$70

PRICE GUIDE KEY: CGC INDICATORS
▲ Average price paid has gone **up THREE months in a row**
△ Average price paid has gone **up since last month**
▲ Average price paid has gone **up TWO months in a row**
▽ Average price paid has gone **down since last month**

Manhunter: Street Justice

After losing a case, disillusioned prosecutor Kate Spencer enlists a former criminal to supply her with weapons and dons red and silver tights to become a vigilante on L.A.'s mean streets.

DC

WRITER:
MARC ANDREYKO

ARTISTS:
JESUS SAIZ, JIMMY PALMIOTTI

COLOR • 128 PGS.
$12.99

Marc Andreyko takes a concept that has become clichéd and makes it new again.

Kate is not a buxom supermodel fighting crime in stilettos and a thong nor is she a female version of The Punisher. Instead, she is an overworked woman disillusioned with the justice system, and that's cost her her marriage and custody of her child, makes her smoke like a chimney, gives her a nasty attitude, and so on. She's lost everything to her job.

And now her job has betrayed her in a sense.

This trade crosses over with *Identity Crisis* and gives a nod to DC's previous *Manhunter* series. It's well worth reading.

★★★ — **Kurt A. Krug**

www.dccomics.com
ISBN: 1-40120-728-6

Detective Comics

	UNSLABBED Near Mint	SLABBED CGC 9.4 NM
CONTINUED		
524	5	
525	4	
526	4	18
527-531	4	
532	4	12
533-534	4	
535	5	
536-554	4	
555	4	15
556-563	4	
564	4	17
565-568	3	
569	4	
570	4	15
571	3	
572	4	
573-574	3	
575	4	18
576	3	11
577	3	13
578	4	17
579-582	4	
583	4	16
584	4	
585	4	16
586	3	12
587	3	12
588	4	16
589	4	
590	4	21
591-619	3	
620	3	13
621-637	3	
638	3	12
639-675	3	
675/Platinum	5	
675/Variant	4	
676	3	
677-682	2	
682/Variant	3	
683-699	2	
700	4	
700/Variant	5	
701-718	2	
719	3	
720	4	
721-722	3	
723-740	2	
741	3	
742-746	2	
747-749	3	
750	5	
751	12	
➥1st Sasha		
752-774	3	
775	4	
776-799	3	
800	4	
801-817	3	
1000000	4	
1000000/Variant	15	
Ann 1	5	
Ann 2	4	
Ann 3-7	3	
Ann 8	4	
Ann 9	3	
Ann 10	4	

Doctor Strange

MARVEL, 1968

	UNSLABBED Near Mint	SLABBED CGC 9.4 NM
169	75 △	252
170	30	114
171	30	118
172	27	100
173	27	109
174	20	69
175	35	138
176	27	142
177	27	235
178	27	89
179	27	112
180	27	122
181	27	99
182	27	
183	27	110

Doctor Strange

MARVEL, 1974

	UNSLABBED Near Mint	SLABBED CGC 9.4 NM
1	25 ▲	86
2	18	77
3	10	55
4	10	42
5	8	31
6	8	26
7	7	30
8	4	17
9	4	
10	7	31
11	6	24
12-13	4	
13/30¢	20	
14	3	
14/30¢	20	
15	3	
15/30¢	20	
16	3	
16/30¢	20	
17	3	
17/30¢	20	
18-23	3	
23/35¢	15	
24	3	
24/35¢	15	
25	3	
25/35¢	15	
26-48	2	
49	2	6
50-81	2	
Ann 1	6	27
Special 1	3	

Doorway to Nightmare

DC, 1978

	UNSLABBED Near Mint	SLABBED CGC 9.4 NM
1	7 △	25
2-5	3	

80 Page Giant Magazine

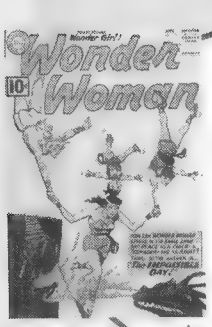
DC, 1964

	UNSLABBED Near Mint	SLABBED CGC 9.4 NM
1	295	1184
2	150	
3-6	125	
7	150	
8	265	1133
➥Secret Origins		
9-10	125	
11	125	512
12	80	330
13-15	80	

Fantastic Four

MARVEL, 1961

	UNSLABBED Near Mint	SLABBED CGC 9.4 NM
1	20000	
➥1st Fantastic Four		
1/Golden	70	329
2	4500	
➥1st Skrulls		
3	3000	
4	3500	
5	5000	
➥1st Dr. Doom		
6	2000	
7	1250	
8	1200	
9-10	1150	
11	1000	
12	2700	
➥Thing vs. Hulk		
13	600	
14	500	
15	700	3271
16-19	500	
20	600	2301
21	450	
22-23	250	
24	240 △	944
25	550	2005
➥Avengers app.		
26	600	2475
➥Avengers app.		
27	300	
28	500	
➥X-Men app.		
29-30	260	
31	260	1301
32	250 ▽	931
33	250	598
34	250	1098
35	165	515
36-37	165	
38	165	555
39-40	165	
41	110	399
42	110	
43	110	652
44	85	302
45	325 ▽	1069
➥1st Inhumans		
46	150	498
47	100	359
48	460 ▽	1615
➥1st Silver Surfer		
49	350	1363
50	400	
51	150	
52	300	1088
➥1st Black Panther		
53	140 ▽	490
54	105	376
55	210	758
➥Thing vs. Surfer		
56	100	386
57	115	419
58	90	301
59	60 ▽	217
60	65	236
61	70	258
62	60	238
63	60	251
64	50	197
65	55	214
66	115	424
➥1st Warlock		
67	105	394
68	60	212
69	60	209
70	55	218
71	45	164
72	100	349
➥Silver Surfer app.		
73	80	283
74	85	307
75	55	209
76	45 ▽	154
77	50	200
78	35 ▽	120
79	50	177
80	40	147
81	40	161
82	40	144
83	40	135
84	40	151
85	40	143
86	50	182
87	40	134
88	35	137
89	35	138
90	30	118
91	30	133
92	30	112
93	30	129
94	40	125
95	30	122
96	30	118
97	25	95
98	25	91
99	30	109
100	70 △	263
101	30	142
102	30	122
103	30	
104	30	137
105	30	124
106	22	79
107	30	123
108	22	77
109	20	76
110	20	62
111	20	76
112	175	645
➥Thing vs. Hulk		
113	25	97
114	27	91
115	25	96
116	65	210
➥52 pages		
117	15	
118	15	57
119	15	58
120	15	101
121	30	111
➥Galactus app.		
122	45 ▽	154
123	27	107
124	20	66
125	20	62
126	30	100
127	35	119
128	30 ▽	93
129	25 ▽	85
130	15	70
131	15	49
132	15 ▽	61
133	12	50
134	12 △	51
135	12	51
136	12	52
137	12	58
138	12	57
139	12	42
140	12	47
141	12 ▽	43
142	12	67
143	12	29
144	12	34
145	12	52
146	10	38
147	15	61
148	10	37
149	10 ▽	37
150	10	46
151	10 ▽	26
152	10	36
153	10	41
154	10	34
155	15 △	66
156	12	47
157	12	43
158	12	39
159	10	35
160	10	36
161	10	38
162	10	38
163	10	40
164	9	32
165	7	24
166	10 ▽	45
167	15	61
168	10	40



△ #124

Wonder Woman

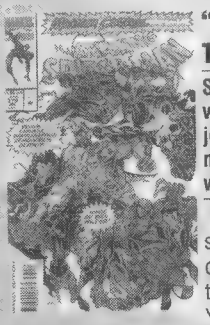
Triple wonders

In *Wonder Woman* #124, Queen Hippolyta created a continuity conundrum that plagued Wonder Woman for many years, by making Wonder Tot and Wonder Girl appear with Wonder Woman as The Wonder Family. Where's Mopee when you really need him?

image © 1961 DC

THE BOTTOM LINE

RETROVIEW
Amazing Spider-Man #379 ★★



"Maximum Carnage, Pt. 7: The Gathering Storm"

Spider-Man acquires more allies with Morbius, Deathlok, and Firestar joining the fight. Unfortunately, Carnage also acquires additional muscle with the addition of Carrion.

Marvel should have given out scorecards to help readers keep track of all the characters added to both teams in this multi-issue crossover. Yeah, it may have helped sales on other titles, but it was confusing to readers who only picked up *Amazing Spider-Man* and/or a few other Marvel titles each month.

And how did Deathlok fit into the group?

Marvel
Jul 1993 • 23 pp.
Writer: David Michelinie
Pencils: Mark Bagley
Inks: Randy Emberlin
Cover: Bagley, Emberlin

© Marvel

Mint CGC copy 9.8 Then $1.25 NOW $5

"Impossible Day" — 1st Wonder Tot

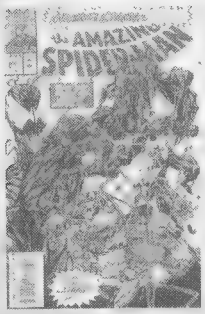
Wonder Tot story

Goes to 12¢

Origin of invisible plane

	121	122	123	124	125	126	127	128	129	130
	APR 61	MAY 61	JUL 61	AUG 61	OCT 61	NOV 61	JAN 62	FEB 62	APR 62	MAY 62
NM Price	$70	$70	$70	$70	$70	$70	$70	$70	$70	$70

Amazing Spider-Man #380 ★



© Marvel

Marvel
Nov 1992 • 22 pp.
Writer: David Michelinie
Pencils: Mark Bagley
Inks: Randy Emberlin
Cover: Bagley, Emberlin

"Maximum Carnage, Pt. 11: Soldiers of Hope"

Nightwatch, Captain America, and Iron Fist join Spider-Man's team and free the citizens of New York from Shriek's influence for a short time.

Yeah, it's really obvious that, if you didn't pick up the other chapters in this crossover, you were going to be hopelessly lost. At one point, David Michelinie had mentioned that both The Avengers and The Fantastic Four were out of town, yet here's Cap helping Spider-Man and his friends. Did he get back early or what?

And, like having Darkhawk in "Round Robin" in 1991, the addition of Nightwatch is an obvious marketing ploy.

UNSLABBED Near Mint	CGC 9.4 NM	SLABBED
10	35	121
➥Man-Thing starts		
11	18	79
12	12	44
13	9	33
14	9	36
15	12	51
16	12	50
17	12	46
18	9	31
19	25 ▽	115
➥1st Howard Duck		
20	20 △	83
➥Morbius begins		
21	9	36
22	7	28
23	8	33
24	12	52
➥Blade app.		
25	8	39
26-29	7	
30	12	51
31	7	

Flash
DC, 1959

105	6500	
106	2000	
107	1000	
108	850	
109	650	
110	1500	
➥1st Kid Flash		
111	450	
112	600	
➥1st Elong. Man		
113	550	
114	275	
115	350	
116	250	
117	300	
118-120	250	
121-122	200	
123	1500	
➥1st Earth-2		
124-128	150	
129	325	
➥GA Flash app.		
130	150	15
131-136	125	
137	475	
➥GA Flash app.		
138-140	125	
141	150	
142	150	518
143	125	
144	100	381
145	100 ▽	387
146	100	
147	100	1384
148	100	
149	100	354
150	100	
151	80	292
152	65	232
153	65	
154-156	60	
157	60 ▽	200
158	60	
159	75	268
160	90	397
➥Giant-size		
161-164	50	
165	70	261
166	50	
167	50	159
168	95	340
169	70	178
➥Origin of Flash		
170-174	50	
175	175	682
➥Race w/Superman		
176	40	173
177	40 △	126
178-179	40	
180	50	198
181	35	112
182	35	
183	35	
162		
184	50	
218		
185-186	35	
187	65	
276		
188-189	35	
190	35	
142		
191	35	
192-193	25	
194	40	
174		
195	25	
196	40	
197-198	25	
199	25	100
200	25	
201-202	20	
203	25	99
204	20	
205	35	170
206	20	

Detective-Flash

$3.00 NOW $3

UNSLABBED Near Mint	CGC 9.4 NM	SLABBED
169	10	46
169/30¢	20	
170	10	42
170/30¢	20	
171	6	25
171/30¢	20	
172	6	30
172/30¢	20	
173	6 ▽	29
173/30¢	20	
174	6	33
175	6	30
176	6	27
177	6	28
178	6	31
179	6	30
180	6	20
181	6	24
182	6	28
183	6 ▲	24
183/35¢	15	
184	6	21
184/35¢	15	
185	5	19
185/35¢	15	
186	5	19
186/35¢	15	
187	5	28
187/35¢	15	
188	5	26
189	5	26
190	5	27
191	5	23
192	5	19
193	5	35
194	5	18
195	5	19
196	5	
197	5	17
198	5	36
199	5	
200	5 ▽	31
201	4	
202	4 ▲	18
203	4	17
204	4	
205	4	19
206	4	
207	4	23
208	4	23
209	4 △	19
210	4	20
211	4	41
212	4	
213	4	19
214	4	
215	4	18
216-226	4	
227	4	13
228-231	4	
232	4	14
➥Byrne script/art begins		
233	4	15
234-235	4	
236	4	18
237	4	
238	4	18
239	4	
240	3	15
241-243	3	
244	3	18
245	3	
246	3	17
247	3	21
248	3	11
249	4	
250	5	18
251	4	
252-255	3	
256	4	15
257-259	3	
260	5	
261	4	
262-268	3	
269	4	
270	3	
271	4	
272	5	
273-277	3	
278	3	15
279-285	3	
286	3	32
287-295	2	
296	3	
297-299	2	
300	3	
301-318	2	
319	3	
320-346	2	
347	3 ▽	10
348	3	18
349-350	3	
351-357	2	
358	3	
359-370	2	
371	3	
372-374	1	
375	3	
376-378	1	
379-380	2	
381	3	
382	2	
383-387	1	
387/Variant	3	
388-394	2	
394/Collector's	3	
395-398	2	
398/Variant	3	
399	2	
399/Variant	3	
400	4	
401-415	2	
416	4	
500	4	16
500/Collector's	4	
501	2	
502	5	
503-508	3	
509	2	
510-513	3	
514-516	2	
517-526	3	
527	7	13
➥Straczynski starts		
527/Variant	4	
527/DirCut	5	
527/Conv	7	
528-535	3	
Ann 1	900	3939
Ann 2	500 ▽	1719
Ann 3	175	
Ann 4	90 ▽	353
Ann 5	60	238
Ann 6	40	250
Ann 7	18	
Ann 8	18	74
Ann 9	10	
Ann 10	8	
Ann 11	8	39
Ann 12	5	28
Ann 13	5	18
Ann 14	5	
Ann 15	3	
Ann 16	3	3
Ann 17-27	3	
Special 1	2	
Ashcan 1	1	

Fear
MARVEL, 1970

1	95	319
2	30	
3	15	48
4	15	61
5	20	72
6-9	15	

CBG Trendwatcher

William Insignares, Demolition Comics

HEATING UP

February was a steady month for us, as *Astonishing X-Men* #13 finally strolled in, kicking off the next volume of this popular X-Men title. We can never order enough copies, and the sell-through never ceases to amaze me. Sales on *Amazing Spider-Man* #529 have been phenomenal, and now, several weeks later, we are still selling them steadily at $4.95 each for the first printings. Expectations for the second printing have been promising. Our hottest Marvel title for February was *Marvel Zombies*. This series is red-hot, and the only negative is that it is only five issues long. It's like nothing else Marvel has ever published, and we get the most welcome gasps of both disbelief and excitement after reading each issue. Customers have contacted us from everywhere and have driven countless miles and hours to pick up issues from this series.

February would not have been a good month without the continuing mammoth event that is *Infinite Crisis*. The second-printing sketch covers of *Infinite Crisis* #3 and #4 shipped on the same week, and many of our customers picked them both up — no problem! Thanks, DC, for keeping our cash registers very active!

LOOK AGAIN

There were several independent #1 issues that had strong debuts this month including: *Mouse Guard*, *In the Blood*, *War of the Worlds Second Wave*, and *Final Destination Spring Break*. Also, last but not least, was the well-received debut of the new action-packed *Mr. T* series by Mig.Biz. This book was exclusive to the New York Comic-Con. Have you guys seen the jaw-dropping Jim Steranko sketch cover on this book? It's incredible!

William Insignares *runs* ***DemolitionComics.com*** *in Tampa, Fla., which he bills as "the world's first multi-lingual international comics super store." He can be contacted at* ***(813) 832-2692*** *or* ***comicsgonewild@aol.com****.*

Wonder Tot story — Wonder Family appears — Mer-Boy appears — Robot Wonder Woman — Reveals secret i.d. — Mer-Boy appears — Wonder Family appears — Mer-Boy vs. Bird-Boy

131	132	133	134	135	136	137	138	139	140	141	142	143	144
JUL 62	AUG 62	OCT 62	NOV 62	JAN 63	FEB 63	APR 63	MAY 63	JUL 63	AUG 63	OCT 63	NOV 63	JAN 64	FEB 64
NM Price $56	$56	$56	$56	$56	$56	$56	$56	$56	$56	$56	$56	$56	$56

PRICE GUIDE KEY: **Unslabbed (loose) Very Fine/Near Mint** is **5/6** (83%) of the unslabbed NM price above **Very Fine (VF)** is **2/3** (67%) of NM **Fine (F)** is **1/3** (33%) of NM **Very Good (VG)** is **1/5** (20%) of NM **Good (G)** is **1/8** (12.5%) of NM

Marvel Romance

Though it would have been good to see pre-1960s stories included in this collection, anyone looking for a crash course in Marvel romance comics (and those who want to see great art from artists usually associated with super-heroes — Jack Kirby, John Buscema, John Romita Sr., Gene Colan, etc.) couldn't ask for a better primer.

MARVEL
WRITERS:
VARIOUS
ARTISTS:
VARIOUS
Color • 176 Pgs.
$19.99

The '60s selections might be hidebound and formula-ridden (there's the relentless trope of anyone smoking a pipe automatically being an upwardly mobile dreamboat, at least until the '70s) but they're all beautifully drawn. The only entry that doesn't belong is a Patsy Walker story from her soap-opera period that's too long to sustain a thin premise — which isn't to say Patsy and Company don't deserve a revival-reprint "event" month of their own.

When you get to the '70s, you can see an honest attempt by top-notch creators to give the material a (then) modern spin, resisting many of the conventions and clichés (the best being a psychedelic entry by Jim Steranko).

★★★½ — **S.A. Bennett**

www.marvel.com
ISBN: 0-78512-089-0

	UNSLABBED Near Mint	SLABBED CGC 9.4 NM
Flash		
CONTINUED		
207	17	
208	17	75
209	17	63
210	17	60
211	17	59
212	17	56
213	25	96
214	40	210
215	35	153
216	17	68
217	17	
218	17	87
219	17	72
220	15	
221	15	61
222	15	57
223-226	15	
227	15	49
228	15	35
229	30	103
230	15	
231	15	37
232	30	101
➥100-page issue		
233-234	10	
235	10	33
236	10	38
237	10	
238-241	7	
242	7	24
243-245	7	
246	12	46
247-251	7	
252	7	29
253-262	7	
263	4	13
264-273	4	
274	5	20
275	7	29
276-288	4	
289	5	
290-299	3	
300	5	
301-304	3	
305-306	4	
307-349	3	
350	7	20
Ann 1	400	
Flash Comics		
DC, 1940		
1	70000	
➥1st Flash, Hawkman		
2	8000	
3	5500	
4	4500	
5	3500	
6	5000	
7	4500	
8	3000	
9-10	3250	
11-20	2000	
21	1600	5313
22	1600	3817
23-24	1600	
25-40	1000	
41-49	800	
50	800	2121
51-61	600	
62	1000	
➥Kubert Hawkman		
63-69	600	
70	550	2175
71-72	550	
73	550	1713
74	550	
75	550	2125
76-79	550	
80	550	1925
81-85	550	
86	2250	
➥1st Black Canary		
87	875	
88-91	900	
92	3000	
➥1st solo Bl. Canary		
93	700	2413
94-99	1000	
100	2500	
➥Scarce		
101-102	2250	
➥Scarce		
103	2500	
➥Scarce		
104	7000	
➥Flash origin recap		
Freedom Fighters		
DC, 1976		
1	12 ▽	36
2	5	
3	5	19
4-15	4	
Friendly Neighborhood Spider-Man		
MARVEL, 2005		
1	3 ▽	21
2-5	3	
Ghost Rider		
MARVEL, 1973		
1	130 ▲	540
2	37	124
3	25	87
4	25	107
5	23	89
6	15	66
7	15	73
8	15	66
9	15	80
10	15	60
11	15	71
12	15	
13	15	42
14	15	45
15	12	34
16	12	33
17	10	39
17/30¢	20	
18	10	33
18/30¢	20	
19	10	38
19/30¢	20	
20	10 △	42
21	7	22
22	7	30
23	7	29
24	7	
24/35¢	15	
25	7	24
25/35¢	15	
26	7	
26/35¢	15	
27-29	7	
30	7	21
31-34	6	
35	6	22
36-37	6	
38	6	44
39	6	
40	6	19
41-47	6	
48	6	30
49	6	
50	12	49
51-53	5	
54	5	34
55	5	34
56	5	33
57-58	5	
59	5	24
60	5	39
61-62	5	
63	5 ▽	34
64	5	
65	5	21
66-68	5	
69	4	23
70	4	34
71-76	4	
77	4	17
78-80	4	
81	10	45
Giant-Size Conan		
MARVEL, 1974		
1	16 ▽	54
2	10	40
3	7	44
4	6	16
5	6	
Giant-Size Invaders		
MARVEL, 1975		
1	15 ▽	58
➥G.A. Subby origin		
Giant-Size Iron Man		
MARVEL, 1975		
1	17 △	79
Giant-Size X-Men		
MARVEL, 1975		
1	800 ▽	1472
➥1st new X-Men		
2	80	123
3-4	5	
G.I. Joe, A Real American Hero		
MARVEL, 1982		
1	14 ▽	32
2	8 ▽	19
3	4 ▽	16
4	4	18
5	4	25
6	4 △	14
7	4	
8	4	15
9	4	22
10	6	20
11	4 △	17
12	4	
13	4	15
14	5	15
15-18	4	
19	6	30
20	4	22
21	15 △	84
➥Silent issue		
22	4	
23	4	10
24-25	4	
26	4	22
27	4	16
28-33	4	
34	4	9
35-45	4	
46	4	10
47-52	4	
53	4	20
54	4	
55	4	13
56	5	7
57	3	
58	4	
59-74	3	
75	3	11
76-92	3	
93	3	20
94	3	
95	3	20
96-149	3	
150	3	20
151	3	19
152	7	31
153	7	27
154	7	
155	16	67
➥Low circulation		
YB 1	3	
YB 2-4	2	
Special 1	20 △	90
Green Lantern		
DC, 1960		
1	4500	
➥1st Guardians		
2	1000	
3	600	
4-5	450	
6	400	
7-10	300	
11-12	200	
13	250	
14-15	175	
16	175 △	570
17	150	555
18-20	150	
21-24	125	
25	125	623
26	125	
27	125	486
28	100	387
29	100	318
30	100 ▽	446
31-33	75	
34	75	243
35	75	279
36	75	
37	75	243
38	75	305
39	75	221
40	350	1262
➥GA Lantern app		
41	75	253
42-46	75	
47	75	315
48	75 ▽	270
49	75	326
50	60	
51	60	188
52	80	317
53	55	
54	55	209
55	55	333
56	55	145
57	55	146
58	55	211
59	125	495
➥1st Guy Gardner		
60-62	50	
63	50	130
64	50	166
65	50	222
66	50	122
67	50	
68	50	212
69	50	251
70-71	50	
72	50	161
73	50	195
74-75	50	
76	375	2301
➥Green Arrow starts		
77	75	243
78	75	280
79	60	
80	60	201

△ #159

Wonder Woman

Back to the good ol' days

With sales faltering, an editorial decision was made to return Wonder Woman to her Golden Age roots in more ways than one. In addition to World War II-era adventures, the art was changed back to its earlier H.G. Peter look with *Wonder Woman* #159 (Jan 66).

image © 1966 DC

Wonder Family appears ▼ — Wonder Girl stories ▼

NM Price	145 APR 64	146 MAY 64	147 JUL 64	148 AUG 64	149 OCT 64	150 NOV 64	151 JAN 65	152 FEB 65	153 APR 65	154 MAY 65
	$56	$56	$56	$50	$56	$50	$50	$50	$50	$50

THE BOTTOM LINE

RETROVIEW
Amazing Spider-Man #381 ★★★

"Samson Unleashed"

A gamma virus experiment malfunctions, infecting Doc Samson and enhancing his strength while raising his anger.

After the multi-part "Maximum Carnage" story, it's good to get back to a simpler tale. Spider-Man's faced The Hulk before, and this issue's cover is misleading, as no Spidey/Hulk battle occurs. The Hulk is only at the beginning and end of the issue.

David Michelinie handles this incarnation of The Hulk well, giving him the same personality quirks that Peter David had developed in the late 1980s and early 1990s. Doc Samson is his same old self. Can anyone actually figure out a workable version of this guy?

Marvel
Sep 1992 • 23 pp.
Writer: David Michelinie
Pencils: Mark Bagley
Inks: Randy Emberlin, Al Milgrom
Cover: Bagley, Emberlin

© Marvel

Best CGC copy: **9.8** **Then $1.25 NOW $4**

Amazing Spider-Man #382 ★★1/2

© Marvel

"Emerald Rage!"

A gamma-virus-infected Hulk battles both Doc Samson and Spider-Man.

Yep, that about says it all for this issue. While Spidey keeps The Hulk busy, Samson seeks information on the gamma virus that's infected him. Finally, it's brains that win the day over brawn with a simple solution to the problem.

Meanwhile, Aunt May hires a private investigator to look into Peter's parents' story. Ooo, mysterious stuff. Good thing she's never been this suspicious of her favorite nephew.

And we get another mention of Mary Jane's smoking problem. This needs to be resolved soon.

Marvel
Oct 1993
Writer: David Michelinie
Pencils: Mark Bagley
Inks: Randy Emberlin
Cover: Bagley, Emberlin

Best CGC copy: **9.8** **Then $1.25 NOW $3**

	UNSLABBED Near Mint	SLABBED CGC 9.4 NM
81	60	208
82	60	227
83	60	187
84	60	199
85 ▽	50	204
86	60	216
➥Drug issue		
87	50	241
88	30	117
89	45	165
90	10	35
91-92	10	
93-96	9	
97	9	29
98	9	
99	9	31
100	10	39
101	9	
102-111	4	
112	8	
113-115	3	
116	8	31
117-121	3	
122	4	
123	6	
124-130	3	
131-135	2	
136-139	3	
140	2	
141	5	
➥1st Omega Men		
142-144	3	
145-149	2	
150	5	18
151-173	2	
174	3	
175-178	2	
179	3	
180-193	2	
194	3	
195	4	15
196-205	2	
Special 1-2	3	

Hawkman
DC, 1964

1	475	1687
2	200	869
3	75	264
4	200	
➥1st Zatanna		
5	65	238
6	65	257
7-9	65	
10	50	235
11-12	50	

13	40	136
14	40	194
15	40	
16	36	
17	36	155
18	36	
19	36	182
20	32	106
21-27	32	

Hellblazer
DC, 1988

1	10	36
2	5	15
3-13	4	
14-26	3	
27	9	29
➥Gaiman story		
28-39	3	
40	4	
41	6	
➥1st Ennis story		
42-46	4	
47-49	3	
50	4	
51-74	3	
75	4	
76-89	3	
90	3	15
91-199	3	
200	5	
201-217	3	
Ann 1	6	
Special 1	5	

Herbie
ACG, 1964

1	95	
2	60	
3-5	48	
6-7	40	
8	50	
9-10	38	
11-23	30	

Hero for Hire
MARVEL, 1972

1	125	459
2	30	51
3	14	
4	12	
5	12	52
6	12	59
7	9	35
8	9	
9	9	51
10	8	32

11	9	39
12	9	37
13	9	50
14	9	38
15	9	28
16	9	

Howard the Duck
MARVEL, 1976

1	15	51
2	5	22
3	4	21
3/30¢	20	39
4	2	22
4/30¢	20	
5-11	2	
12	7	29
13	5	22
13/35¢	15	
14	2	
14/35¢	15	
15	2	
15/35¢	15	
16	2	
16/35¢	15	
17	2	
17/35¢	15	
18-32	2	
33	3	
Ann 1	4	18

Hulk
MARVEL, 1999

1	4	17
1/A	5	21
1/Gold	4	73
2-7	3	
8	3	31
9-11	3	

Identity Crisis
DC, 2004

1	15	9
1/Sketch	225	157
1/DF	15	
2	8	
3	7	
4	8	
5	7	
6	8	
7	7	

Identity Disc
MARVEL, 2004

1-5	3	

	UNSLABBED Near Mint	SLABBED CGC 9.4 NM
Incredible Hulk		
MARVEL, 1962		
-1	2	
1	13000	
➥1st Hulk		
2	3500	
3	2000	
4-5	1750	
6	2250 △	8033
102	150 ▽	502
103	100	365
104	75	268
105	70	226
106	50	178
107	50 ▽	151
108	50	140
109	50	134
110	50	159
111	50 ▲	116
112	50	126
113	40	154
114	40	133
115	40	148
116	35	96

Bird-Man appears · Egg Fu appears · Fights Egg Fu · Back to Golden Age · Cheetah appears · Fights Giganta · Fights Paper-Man · Fights Egg Fu · Magic Lasso story

	155	156	157	158	159	160	161	162	163	164	165	166	167	168	169
	JUL 65	AUG 65	OCT 65	NOV 65	JAN 66	FEB 66	APR 66	MAY 66	JUL 66	AUG 66	OCT 66	NOV 66	JAN 67	FEB 67	APR 67
NM Price	$50	$50	$50	$50	$50	$30	$30	$40	$30	$30	$30	$30	$30	$30	$30

PRICE GUIDE KEY: OTHER CGC GRADES
Slabbed CGC 9.8 (NM/M) is **3 times** the CGC 9.4 price above
CGC 9.0 (VF/NM) is **2/5 (40%)** of CGC 9.4
CGC 9.6 (NM+) is **1.5 times** CGC 9.4
CGC 8.0 (VF) is **1/5 (20%)** of CGC 9.4

CBG Trendwatcher

Jon Newman, Ultimate Comics

HEATING UP

Marvel has been the hit-maker of late. *Marvel Zombies* has gone crazy. Copies sell out the week they ship, and Marvel has to reprint them almost immediately. The formula for success was well-played by Marvel on this series: Get an expert on the genre to write the series, have a style of art that fits the mood of the story perfectly, put classic homage covers on the issues, and introduce the series in a popular regular title. Well played, Marvel, well played, indeed. I can't figure out why orders weren't higher on this. With "Spider-Man: 'The Other' " over, the debut of Spidey's new costume was an instant hit. "Planet Hulk" has also been a book that flew off the shelves. All of these exceeded my high expectations. *Astonishing X-Men* returned to high sales but not to the title of #1 Marvel, which is now firmly in the hands of *New Avengers*. Since the second hardcover collection came out, sales have increased 20%, while first-month sales on *Astonishing X-Men* #13 sold the same as #12. DC's *Infinite Crisis* continues to outsell everything else at my store and has done a great job of renewing interest in back issues that are mildly related to it. The first few "One Year Later" titles are selling well, but *52* continues to sound like the scariest comic for retailers to order. If you want *52*, tell your store now, because they are biting their fingernails over this one. *Star Wars: Knights of the Old Republic* sold as well as *Serenity* did in our stores. Vertigo's new wave continues to add new readers each issue, as do all books written by Brian Wood. *Local* and *Supermarket* have been gigantic for us. *Red Sonja* has seen renewed interest, as the issues actually come out. This is good, because we are getting in issues that were ordered almost half a year ago. *Mouse Guard* was a big indy hit. I deem it indy of the month.

COOLING DOWN

People continue to slow up on Marvel mini-series. If people aren't hooked after the first issue, then they stop getting it. They only problem with that is that most Marvel minis don't start getting good until #3. Other than *Red Sonja*, issues that are terribly late seem to anger 10-20% of the people who are reading them enough to stop buying them. Sales have been lower on *Teen Titans, Supergirl*, and *Superman/Batman* the last few issues due to lateness.

House Picks

Wonder(ful) recommendations

1. ***DC: The New Frontier.*** One of the best-written Wonder Woman stories in an overall well-written mini-series. Buy these trades *now*.
2. **"Sacrifice."** Wonder Woman just isn't very nice any more, is she?
3. ***Wonder Woman* TV show DVD sets.** Super-cool super-hero show
4. ***Superman/Batman/Wonder Woman: Trinity.*** A great series for fans of Superman, Batman, or Wonder Woman
5. **(tie) *Adventures of Jerry Lewis* #117 (Mar 70).** Best Jerry Lewis ever. **Mod *Wonder Woman* issues.** A greatly underappreciated segment of *Wonder Woman* lore (including #179-204, Dec 68-Feb 73) in which Diana Prince had no costume or powers.

Jon Newman *is the manager of* ***Ultimate Comics*** *in Durham, N.C., which can be reached at* ***(919) 806-8282*** *or at* ***www.ultimatecomicsonline.com***

Marvel Team-Up #14

This installment of *Marvel Team-Up* co-stars Robert Kirkman and Cory Walker's nigh-invulnerable Invincible. While battling a bad guy with trans-dimensional powers, the Image-published hero is catapulted into the Marvel universe and somehow manages to land smack-dab in the middle of a Spidey-Doc Ock smack down. Spider-Man and Invincible become fast friends and exchange witty banter, some of which moves the story along, and some of which is spoken solely to amuse.

MARVEL
WRITER:
ROBERT KIRKMAN
ARTIST:
CORY WALKER
COLOR • 48 PGS.
$2.99

Pairing Spidey with Invincible is a good idea. Having *Invincible* co-creator Cory Walker illustrate the adventure — not so good. His sparse, lighthearted style is fairly pleasant for the most part, but it's lacking when The Avengers enter the scene. Kirkman's script, which is likable overall and contains a number of genuine chuckles, is surprisingly awkward in spots, such as when Mary Jane practically shills for a major movie-rental chain. By the end of the issue, Spidey's world returns to normal. However, readers are advised to pick up *Invincible* #33 to continue Invincible's predicament.

★★½ — **Brett Weiss**

www.marvel.com

	UNSLABBED Near Mint	SLABBED CGC 9.4 NM
Inc. Hulk		
CONTINUED		
117	35	119
118	35	184
119	35	115
120	35	122
121	35	167
122	55	231
➥Thing vs. Hulk		
123	30	89
124	30	121
125	30	96
126	25	115
127	25	64
128	25	100
129	25	78
130	25	80
131	30	118
132	25 △	101
133	20	86
134	16 △	56
135	16	55
136	16	
137	20	95
138	20	81
139	20	77
140	20 ▽	78
➥Harlan Ellison		
141	20 △	252
➥1st Doc Samson		
142	20 △	92
143	20	109
144	20	71
145	20	183
146	20	
147	20	88
148	20	55
149	20	72
150	20	54
151	20	62
152	25	79
153	20	106
154	20	67
155	20 △	68
156	20	59
157-158	20	
159	20	79
160	20	64
161	30	108
162	55	191
➥1st Wendigo		
163	15	55
164	15	
165	15	48
166	15	55
167	15	53
168	15	
169	15	70
170	15 △	56
171	15	88
172	25	89
➥X-Men app.		
173	15	52
174	15 △	40
175	15	47
176	15	45
177	17	66
178	17 ▽	58
179	16	50
180	180 ▽	612
➥Wolverine cameo		
181	750 ▽	1970
➥1st Wolverine story		
181/Ace	5	24
		182

	UNSLABBED Near Mint	SLABBED CGC 9.4 NM
100	▽328	
➥2nd Wolverine		
183	12	45
184	10	
185	10	28
186	10	30
187	10	
188	10	67
189	10 △	81
190	10 ▽	27
191	8	55
192	8	33
193	8	49
194	8	27
195	8	33
196	8	41
197	8	51
198	8	34
198/30¢	20	
199	8	27
199/30¢	20	
200	11 ▲	40
200/30¢	30	
201	7	
201/30¢	20	
202	7	39
202/30¢	20	
203	7	28
204-205	7	
206	7	31
207	7	
208	7	28
209	7	
210	7	20
211	7	32
212	7	
212/35¢	15	
213	7	
213/35¢	15	
214	7	27
214/35¢	15	
215	7 ▽	16
215/35¢	15	
216	7	
216/35¢	15	
217	7	
218	7	40
219-222	5	
223	5	19
224	5	22
225-230	5	
231	5	18
232	5	
233	5	22
234	5	33
235	5	24
236-240	5	
241-248	4	
249	4	15
250	7	28
251-285	3	
286	4	
287-295	3	
296	5	
297	4	
298-299	3	
300	4	21
301-302	3	
303	3	13
304-313	3	
314	3	16
315-319	3	
320-323	2	
324	5	22
325	3	
326	4	
327-328	3	
329	2	
330	5	19
➥1st McFarlane		
331	5	16
332-334	5	
335	2	
336-339	3	
340	14 △	36
➥vs. Wolverine		

Mouse Man appears

	UNSLABBED Near Mint	SLABBED CGC 9.4 NM
341	4	14
342-349	2	
350	5	18
➥1st Dale Keown		
351-371	2	
372	3	10
373	2	13
374-375	2	
376	2	12
377	3	13
378	3	
379	2	11
380-384	2	
385	4	11
386	3	
387-391	2	
392	3	
393	4	10
394	3	
395-399	2	
400	3	
401-417	2	
418	2	13
418/Variant	3	
419	2	
420	2	4
421-425	2	
425/Variant	4	
426-448	2	
449	8	16
450	5	
451-474	2	
Ann 1	115 ▽	395
Ann 2	40	141
Ann 3	25	98
Ann 4	25	189
Ann 5	9	36
Ann 6	7	24
Ann 7	9	42
Ann 8	5	19
Ann 9	3	
Ann 10	4	15
Ann 11	3	10
Ann 12-19	3	
Ann 20	4	
Ann '97-'98	3	
Ashcan 1	1	

Incredible Hulk
MARVEL, 1999
➥Cont'd from Hulk

12-20	3	
21-24	2	
25	3	25
26-33	2	

	UNSLABBED Near Mint	SLABBED CGC 9.4 NM
34	13 ▽	30
➥Bruce Jones starts		
35	6	21
36	5	15
37	5	14
38	5	12
39	4	13
40	4	10
41	4	
42-44	3	
45	3	11
46	3	
47-49	2	
50	5	12
51	4	14
52	3	
53	3	10
54	3	9
55-63	2	
64	3	9
65-66	2	
67-72	3	
73-74	2	
75-76	4	
77-82	3	
83	5	
83/2nd	4	
84	3	
84/2nd	4	
85-92	3	
Ann 1999	5	
Ann 2000	4	
Ann 2001	3	

Infinite Crisis
DC, 2005

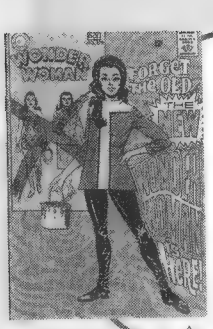
1/Both covers	8
2/Both covers	6
3-5/Both covers	4

Iron Man
MARVEL, 1968

1	250 ▽	895
2	60 ▽	193
3	60	178
4	60	197
5	55	203
6	50	146
7	50	166
8	40	152
9	90	182
10	42	151
11	35	127
12	35	118
13	27	79

	UNSLABBED Near Mint	SLABBED CGC 9.4 NM
14	27 ▽	104
15	27 ▽	81
16	27	114
17	27	96
18	25	75
19	25	109
20	25	104
21	20	79
22	20	72
23	20	67
24	20	108
25	20	
26	20	78
27	20	70
28	20	75
29	20	
30	20	51
31	15	
32	15	66
33	15	
34	15	122
35	15 ▽	66
36	15	62
37	15	64
38	15	
39	15	70
40	15	49
41	12	
42	12	51
43	35	144
➥1st Guardsman		
44	12	
45	15 ▽	51
46	15	60
47	35	127
➥Barry Smith art		
48-49	12	
50	12 △	45
51	17 ▽	51
52	10	69
53	10	54
54	16	
55	110 ▲	457
➥1st Thanos		
56	15 △	57
➥Starlin art		
57	15	54
58	15	41
59	15	
60	15	69
61	15	
62	15	70
63-65	15	
66	15 △	71
67	15 △	40
68	10	50

Supergirl appears — Gets makeover — Loses costume



△ #178

Wonder Woman

Made over into a mod maid

When Mike Sekowsky came on board the series as both artist and editor, it was decided to update Wonder Woman into a more modern crimefighter, to the point of putting her in '60s fashions and fighting with martial arts rather than Amazonian techniques.

image © 1968 DC

NM Price	170 JUN 67 $30	171 AUG 67 $25	172 OCT 67 $25	173 DEC 67 $25	174 FEB 68 $25	175 APR 68 $25	176 JUN 68 $25	177 AUG 68 $25	178 OCT 68 $25	179 DEC 68 $25

THE BOTTOM LINE

RETROVIEW
Amazing Spider-Man #383 ★★★

"Trial by Jury, Pt. 1: Judgement Night"

The Jury, a group of armored vigilantes, comes to New York to capture Spider-Man and put him on trial for bringing the alien symbiote to Earth.

Marvel
Nov 1993
Writer: David Michelinie
Pencils: Mark Bagley
Inks: Randy Emberlin
Cover: Bagley, Emberlin

Marvel didn't go the biweekly issue route for the final issues of 1993. Instead, David Michelinie brought The Jury east after the group tried to bring Venom to justice and failed. The set-up's good with references to "Invasion of the Spider-Slayers," and plenty of time is spent on such sub-plots as Aunt May's digging for the truth about Richard and Mary Parker and Mary Jane and Peter's search for an apartment.

© Marvel

1st CGC copy 9.8 Then $1.25 NOW $3

Amazing Spider-Man #384 ★★★½

© Marvel

"Trial by Jury, Pt. 2: Dreams of Innocence"

A drugged and helpless Spider-Man is put on trial by The Jury.

It's unclear if Spider-Man's thoughts and recriminations are caused by the drugs, the "testimony" of the "trial," or both, but this issue gives plenty of background on Spider-Man, Venom, and Carnage.

In the sub-plot category, Mary Jane's smoking habit is addressed again, and she finally questions why she's taken it up. It took long enough to get there, but now it looks as if maybe it will be dealt with. The best scene in the issue is Aunt May's harsh treatment of the detective she hired.

Marvel
Dec 1993
Writer: David Michelinie
Pencils: Mark Bagley
Inks: Randy Emberlin, Al Milgrom
Cover: Bagley, Emberlin

Near Mint copy **9.8** Then $1.25 NOW $3

	UNSLABBED Near Mint	SLABBED CGC 9.4 NM
69-72	10	
73	10	31
74	10	36
75	10	30
76	10	52
77	10	35
78-79	10	
80	10	33
81	10	36
82	10	20
83	10	
84	10	32
85	10	21
85/30¢	20	
86	10	41
86/30¢	20	
87	10	
87/30¢	20	105
88	10	33
88/30¢	20	
89	10	34
89/30¢	20	
90-91	10	
92	10	19
93	10	28
94	10	27
95	10	24
96	10	29
97	10	39
98	8	27
99	8 △	21
99/35¢	15	
100	12	47
100/35¢	18	
101	7	
101/35¢	12	
102	7	
102/35¢	12	
103	7	
103/35¢	12	
104	7	38
105	7	32
106	7	
107	7	16
108	7	
109	7	33
110-111	7	
112	7 ▽	23
113	7	
114	7	19
115	7	18
116-117	7	
118	7	20
119	7	
120	7	23
121-122	7	
123	7	18
124-125	7	
126	7	20
127	7	20
128	7	37
➥Alcoholism issue		
129	7	24
130	5	18
131-132	5	
133	5	12
134-136	5	
137	5	23
138-139	5	
140	5	17
141-149	5	
150	7	22
151-153	5	
154	7	17
155	5	19
156	5	16
157-159	5	
160	7	
161-170	5	
171-181	3	
182	4	
183-185	3	
186	4	
187-191	3	
192	4	
193-195	3	
196	3	15
197-200	3	
201-224	2	
225-232/A	3	
233	2	17
234	2	
235	2	17
236-237	2	
238	2	15
239	2	9
240-243	2	
244	3	10
245	2	10
246-250	2	
251-257	1	
258-280	2	
281-282	3	
283-284	2	
285-287	1	
288	3	
289	1	
290	4	
291-299	1	
300	3	
300/Variant	4	
301-304	1	
305-310	2	
310/Collector's	3	
311-316	2	
317	3	
318-324	2	
325	3	
326-332	2	
Ann 1	27 △	139
Ann 2	20	89
Ann 3	10	27
Ann 4	4	
Ann 5-10	3	
Ann 11-13	2	
Ann 14-15	3	
Ashcan 1	2	

Iron Man & Sub-Mariner
MARVEL, 1968

1	100 ▽	393

JLA
DC, 1997

1	6 ▽	18
2	4	13
3	4	11
4	4	
5	4	14
6	4	
7-15	3	
16-40	2	
41	3	
42-49	2	
50	4	
51-74	2	
75	4	
76-99	2	
100	4	5
101-106	2	
➥Post ID Crisis		
107-108	5	
➥Post ID Crisis		
109-114	2	
115	12	19
➥ID Crisis follow-up		
116	5	
117-125	3	
1000000	2	
Ann 1	6	
Ann 2	5	
Ann 3	4	
GS 1-2	5	
GS 3	6	

May Comics Birthdays

May 1
Alex Nino (1940)
Phil Foglio (1956)
Tim Sale (1956)
Mike Anderson (1971)

May 2
Glenn Herdling
Doug Wildey (1922)
Howard Cruse (1944)
Jerry Scott (1955)
Debbie David (1959)
Ryan Brown (1962)

May 3
John Cullen Murphy (1919)
Mell Lazarus (1927)
Denny O'Neil (1939)
Bill Sienkiewicz (1958)
Chris Ulm (1963)
Harrison Fong (1964)
Adam Hughes (1967)

May 4
Nestor Redondo (1928)
Wayne R. Reid (1937)
John Ridgway (1940)
Doug Cushman (1953)
Damon Willis (1963)
Tom Richmond (1966)

May 5
Stan Goldberg (1932)
Moebius (Jean Giraud) (1938)

May 6
David Michelinie (1948)
Rob Carosella (1951)
Dennis Jensen (1952)

May 7
Tony Auth (1942)
Michael T. Gilbert (1951)
Vince Musacchia (1952)

May 8
Erich Mees (1970)

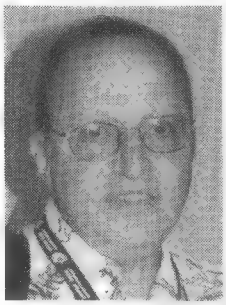
May 9
Richard Hodgins Jr. (1931)
Barbara Slate (1947)
David Campiti (1958)
Ty Templeton (1963)

May 10
Vincent T. Hamlin (1901)
Alex Schomburg (1905)
Murray R. Ward (1951)

May 11
Ed Furness (1910)
Mike Curtis (1953)
Matt Feazell (1955)
Nick Burns (1957)
Sandy Carruthers (1962)

May 12
Tony Strobl (1915)
Catherine Yronwode (1947)
Tom Armstrong (1950)
Neil D. Vokes (1954)
Scott Deschaine (1957)

May 13



Marv Wolfman (1946)
Andrew Pepoy (1969)

May 14
Brad Anderson (1924)
Eric Dinehart (1952)
Bob Wayne (1954)

May 15
John G. Fantucchio (1938)
Victor Ramon Mojica (1949)
Gary Leach (1957)
Paul Curtis (1958)
Jeff Dee (1961)

May 16
Ray Zone (1947)
Christopher K. Browne (1952)
Henry Vogel (1957)
Chester Brown (1960)
Chuck Maly (1960)

May 17
Steve Geiger
Gary Leach
Dave Sim (1956)
Chris Ecker (1958)
Malcolm Bourne (1962)
Pete Fitzgerald (1968)

May 18
Alan Kupperberg
Don Martin (1939)
Arthur Suydam (1953)
James W. Fry (1960)
James L. Sanders III (1963)

May 19
Neil A. Robertson (1954)
Frank Albanese (1955)
Reggie Byers (1963)
Anthony Monzo III (1967)
Robert Bostick (1968)

May 20
Gail Beckett (1942)
Alan D. Oldman (1963)
Al Bigley (1965)

May 21
Nansi Hoolahan
Don Trachte (1915)
Lee Elias (1920)
Gary Reed (1956)

May 22
Carlos Garzón (1945)
Jim Rohn (1958)

May 23
Win Mortimer (1919)
John Bolton (1951)

May 24
Evan Skolnick
Carmine Infantino (1925)
Everette Hartsoe (1967)

May 25
Clay Geerdes (1934)
Barry Windsor-Smith (1949)
Stan Sakai (1953)
Sal Velluto (1956)
Marc Hempel (1957)
Terry Nantier (1957)
Bud Rogers (1963)
Kyle J. Bertelsen (1970)

May 26
E. Silas Smith (1934)
Herb Trimpe (1939)
Marcus David (1950)
Verzell Keith James (1961)
Rachelle A. Menashe (1961)

May 27
Carrie Spiegle
Vince Westerband
Harlan Ellison (1934)
George Freeman (1951)
Louis Scarborough Jr. (1953)
Mark Wheatley (1954)
Charles Santino (1955)

May 28
Lynn Johnston (1947)
Charles Marshall (1963)
Chad Hunt (1965)
Geoffrey White (1971)

May 29
Jim Salicrup
Larry Marder (1951)

May 30
Mort Meskin (1916)
Mike W. Barr (1952)
Peter Quinones (1957)
Kevin Eastman (1962)

May 31
Andy Yanchus (1944)
David Anthony Kraft (1952)
Glenn Boyd (1960)
Dean E. Haspiel (1967)

Steve Trevor dies — Fights Dr. Cyber — Goes to 15¢ — Back to Paradise Island — Fights Dr. Cyber

180	181	182	183	184	185	186	187	188	189	190	191	192	193	194
FEB 69	APR 69	JUN 69	AUG 69	OCT 69	DEC 69	FEB 70	APR 70	JUN 70	AUG 70	OCT 70	DEC 70	FEB 71	APR 71	JUN 71
NM Price $26	$33	$33	$33	$33	$33	$33	$33	$33	$33	$33	$40	$40	$40	$40

PRICE GUIDE KEY: OTHER GRADES **Unslabbed (loose) Very Fine/Near Mint** is **5/6** (83%) of the unslabbed NM price above **Very Fine (VF)** is **2/3** (67%) of NM **Fine (F)** is **1/3** (33%) of NM **Very Good (VG)** is **1/5** (20%) of NM **Good (G)** is **1/8** (12.5%) of NM

Metadocs #1

Super-hero reality comics have run the gamut from coffee shops to TV ride-alongs. That there is anything left to tap is in itself amazing. Metadocs occurs in and around the super-hero ER. In the introductory issue, a rock-encrusted hero has a huge hole blown in him. What to do?

ANTARCTIC PRESS
WRITERS:
ROD ESPINOSA, JOE DUNN
ARTIST:
ESPINOSA
COLOR • 48 PGS.
$4.95

Is Antarctic Press President Joe Dunn really an MD? From his introduction, it would appear so. (And why not? This reviewer has several degrees but only uses a title or suffix in appropriate contexts.) In any event, he certainly seems to know about medicine and it shows.

As far as the art goes, Rod Espinosa could eat spaghetti and wipe his mouth on a napkin, and the result would probably exceed the art in some other comics. Here, since he has apparently used a pencil and brush rather than a marinara-soaked napkin, the result is his usual, which is truly exceptional. His manga-styled characters retain a distinctive look, and nobody in the industry does architecture better.

Any opportunity to get Espinosa in color is a treat, indeed.

★★★ — Jack Abramowitz

www.antarcticpress.com

RetroView
Congo Bill™

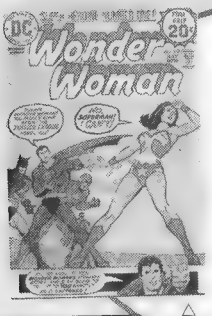
Reviewed by Michelle Nolan

DC's penchant for putting gorillas on covers found a natural home in Congo Bill, which featured gorillas on three of seven covers, along with a rhino, a baboon, a crocodile, and elephants. Of the DC characters who eventually received their own comics after beginning their runs in anthology titles, few had to wait as long as Congo Bill. Fourteen years passed from the time he was introduced in More Fun Comics #56 (Jun 40). He ran in More Fun through #67 (May 41), then switched to Action Comics with #37 (Jun 41). He was a solid backup for two decades until eventually morphing into Congorilla.

Congo Bill ™ DC Comics

COST TO OWN THE ORIGINALS IN NM: $3,675

	UNSLABBED Near Mint	SLABBED CGC 9.4 NM
Joker		
DC, 1975		
1	16 ▲	50
2	12 ▽	22
3	8	
4	8	24
5	8	35
6	7	
7	7	45
8	7	26
9	7	30
Jonah Hex		
DC, 1977		
1	28 ▽	106
2	10	36
3-4	7	
5	7	27
6	6	35
7	7	37
8	7	34
9-10	5	
11-20	4	
21-22	3	
23	3	31
24-92	3	
Journey Into Mystery		
MARVEL, 1952		
-1	2	
1	3100	84
2	950	
3-4	700	
5	800	45
6-9	450	
10	450	19
11	450	
12	350	25
13-17	350	
18	350	24
19-22	350	
23-32	225	
33	250	
34-40	225	
41-49	200	
50	160	
51-61	155	
62	250	
63-71	145	
72	140	
73	200	
74-81	140	
82	160	
83	4500	
➥1st Thor		
83/Golden Recor	60	
238		
84	725	
85	450	
86	400	
87	600	3145
88	250	
89	300	
90	150	
91-92	130	
93	160	
94-95	130	
96	130 ▽	1431
97	325	1632
98	120	1378
99	105	
100	115	
101	150	1338
102	75 ▽	856
103-104	75	
105	75	800
106	75	1116
107-108	75	
109	90	
110-111	75	
112	210	3625
➥Thor vs. Hulk		
113	75	934
114	75	1450
115	90	
116	75	
117	70 ▽	667
118	70	845
119-120	70	
121	70	265
122	70 ▽	748
123	70	516
124	70 ▽	245
125	70	
503-521	2	
Ann 1	150	1179
Justice League of America		
DC, 1960		
1	5000	
2	1250	4050
3	1000	
4	700	
5	600	
6-8	400	
9	1000	3888
➥JLA origin		
10	400	
11-15	250	
16	225	700
17-20	225	
21	350	2300
➥Earth-2 visit		
22	325	
23-30	150	
31	100	658
32	90	235
33	90	
34	75	291
35-36	75	
37	125 △	416
➥Supes vs. Cap. Mrv		
38	125	495
39	125	
40	75	
41	75	287
42	60	
43	60	285
44	60	
45	60	339
➥1st SA Sandman		
46	110	468
➥JSA app.		
47	95	336
48	140	403
➥Giant issue		
49	60	296
50	60	220
51-52	60	
53	55	211
54	55	246
55	115	417
➥JSA team-up		
56	100	350
➥JSA team-up		
57-59	55	
60	55	207
61	55	172
62	55	
63	45	143
64	45	183
65	45	129
66	45	207
67	60	
➥Giant		
68	50	165
69	45	112
70	45	256
71	45	
72	45	227
➥Giant		
73-77	35	
78	35	126
79	35	
80	35	127
81	35	
82	45	152
➥G.A. Batman app.		
83-84	30	
85	40	136
➥Giant		
86	25	
87	25	91
88	25	
89	25	93
90	25	95
91	35	145
92	32	131
93	25	
➥Giant		
94	60	204
➥Sandman origin		
95	20	136
96	20	71
97	20	71
98	20	91
99	20	
100	65	241
101-102	20	
103	20	67
104-106	20	
107	25	81
108	25	83
109	20	
110	25	
111	25	118
112-113	25	
114	25	127
115	25	
116	25	89
117-119	15	
120	15	40
121-122	15	
123	15	45
124	15	53
125	15	52
126-127	10	
128	10	29
129	10	
130	10	32
131	10	47
132	10	17
133-135	10	
136	10	51
137	20	69
138	7	30
139	7	53
140	7	30
141-146	7	
147	7	32
148	7	
149	7	37
150	7	36
151	5	28
152	5	32
153	5	
154	5	25
155-156	5	
157	5	40
158	5	
159	5	35
160-165	5	
166-167	12	
168	25	53
➥Mindwipe story		
169-183	5	
184	5	35
185-192	5	
193	5	20
194-199	5	
200	7	26
201	3	
202	3	12
203-217	3	
218	4	
219	3	
220	4	
221-226	3	
227	4	
228-260	3	
261	4	
Ann 1	5	
Ann 2-3	4	
Kid Eternity		
QUALITY, 1946		
1	560 △	1154
2	290	
3	250	
4-5	175	
6-10	135	
11-18	105	
Magnus, Robot Fighter		
GOLD KEY, 1963		
1	200	
2-3	125	
4-10	60	
11-13	35	
14	35	91
15	35	
16	35	125
17-18	35	
19	35 ▽	64
20	35	
21-28	20	
29-45	10	
45/Whitman	18	
46	10	
Man-Thing		
MARVEL, 1974		
1	30 ▽	85
2	14	27
3	10	57
4	8	33
5	10	31
6	5	30
7	5	37
8-10	5	
11	3	31
12	3	49
13	3	35
14	3	38
15-16	3	
17	3	30
18-19	3	
20	3	36
21-22	3	
Marvel Feature		
MARVEL, 1971		
1	125 ▽	375
2	60	157
3	30	89
4	25	87
5	10	40
6	10 △	32
7	10	35
8	10	
9	10	35
10	10	
11	55 ▽	176
➥Thing vs. Hulk		
12	35	84
Marvel Feature		
MARVEL, 1975		
1	10 △	43
2	3 ▽	32
3	3	19
4	3	
4/30¢	35	179
5	3	27
5/30¢	20	
6	3	36
7	3	27



△ #212

Wonder Woman

Herculean tasks

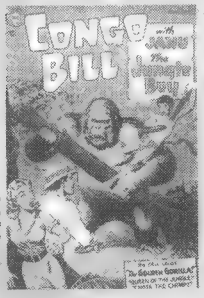
Beginning with *Wonder Woman* #212 (Jun 74), Wonder Woman assigned herself 12 tasks before she could rejoin The Justice League. Her fellow League members reported on her missions and, in the end, proclaimed her fit for duty once again.

Image © 1974 DC

THE BOTTOM LINE

	Goes to 25¢	Fights Dr. Cyber	Reprints #183-184	Jonny Double appears	Dr. Cyber dies	Drops to 20¢	Catwoman appears	Regains costume; I Ching dies
	195 AUG 71	196 OCT 71	197 DEC 71	198 FEB 72	199 APR 72	200 JUN 72	201 AUG 72	202 OCT 72	203 DEC 72	204 FEB 73
NM Price	$40	$40	$40	$40	$40	$40	$14	$14	$14	$14

Congo Bill #1 ★★★



© DC Comics

DC Comics
Sep 1954
Writer: Uncredited
Pencils: Uncredited
Inks: Uncredited
Cover: Nick Cardy

"The Golden Gorilla!" • 8 pp.

A hunter's son is rescued by Janu's "friend" Bogadu, a golden gorilla, giving Congo Bill a legal way to overcome the problem presented by the hunter's license.

This is the kind of jungle fantasy that doubtless misled kids, but the story is fun and offers a pleasing moral, to boot.

"Chota the Chimp!" • 8 pp.

Janu rescues a chimp with a broken tooth and names him Chota, meaning "cute" in jungle lingo.

"The Queen of the Jungle!" • 8 pp.

"Fear in the Jungle" • 2 text pp.

Just CGC copy: 8.0 Then 10¢ Now $1,100

	UNSLABBED Near Mint	SLABBED CGC 9.4 NM
Marvel Premiere		
MARVEL, 1972		
1	35 ▽	122
2	12 ▽	40
3 ➥Dr. Strange	30	101
4	10 ▽	38
5	8	
6	8	47
7	15	58
8	10	42
9	6 ▽	27
10	9	42
11	5	
12	5	46
13	8	34
14	12 ▽	38
15 ➥1st Iron Fist	80 △	306
16 ➥2nd Iron Fist	20	60
17	12	41
18	12	44
19	10	36
20	10	34
21	10	46
22	10	32
23	10	21
24	10	31
25	15	49
26	4	15
27	10	38
28	13	51
29	3	
29/30¢	20	
30	3	13
30/30¢	20	
31	3	18
31/30¢	20	
32	3	16
33-36	3	
36/35¢	15	
37	3	
37/35¢	15	
38	3	16
38/35¢	15	
39	3	
40	3	17
41-46	3	
47	3	15
48-49	3	
50 ➥1st Alice Cooper	13	32
51	3	
52	3	28
53	3	22
54-56	3	
57	5	20
58-61	3	
Marvel Spotlight		
MARVEL, 1971		
1	25	82
2 ➥1st Werewolf	130	485
3	30	109
4	30	104
5 ➥1st Ghost Rider	275 ▽	1163
6	45 ▽	149
7	35	154
8	25	90
9	30 △	95
10	35	131
11	22	77
12	22 ▽	68
13	12	
14-15	10	
16-19	7	
20	5	
21	5	34
22	6	
23-24	5	
25	3	
26	3	25
27	3	
27/30¢	20	
28	10 ▽	52
28/30¢	18	169
29	9	30
29/30¢	15	
30-31	3	
32 ➥1st Spider-Woman	50	57
33	3	
Miracleman		
ECLIPSE, 1985		
1	10 △	23
2	8	18
3	8	15
4	8	20
4/Gold	15	
5	8	
5/Platinum	15	
6-7	8	
8	8	16
8/Gold	15	
9	10	
10	10	17
11	14	
12	14 ▽	18
13	18	22
14	24	20
15	35 ▽	89
16	16	20
17	25	
17/Gold	40	
18	20	
19-22	15	
23	16	
24	25	38
3D 1	10	
3D 1/Gold	18	
Ms. Marvel		
MARVEL, 1977		
1	8 △	30
2	3	20
3-4	3	
5	3	24
6	3	20
6/35¢	15	
7	3	24
7/35¢	15	
8	3	
8/35¢	15	
9 ➥1st Mystique	3	
9/35¢	15	
10	3	
10/35¢	15	
11-15	2	
16 ➥Mystique cameo	15	43
17	8	37
18 ➥1st Mystique	40 △	165
19	3	27
20-23	2	
New Avengers		
MARVEL, 2005		
0/Military ➥Promo for U.S. troops	10	
1	7	27
1/Retailer ed. ➥Spider-Man cover	70 ▽	48
1/DirCut	5	
1/Quesada	12	
1/Finch	9	
1/2nd	3	
2	2	
2/Hairsine	45	28
3	2	
3/Wolverine	45	35
4	3	
4/Cheung	15	
4/DF	20	
5	2	
5/Granov	15	
6	2	
6/Hitch	15	14
7	2	
7/Adams	25	
8	3	
8/Romita	20	
9	3	
9/Trimpe	15	
10-16	3	
New Teen Titans		
DC, 1980		
1	8 ▽	32
2 ➥1st Deathstroke	10 △	61
3	3	27
4-6	3	
7	3	18
8	3	
9	3	18
10	3	
11-21	2	
22	2	11
23-38	2	
39	3	
40	2	
Ann 1	3	8
Ann 2-3	2	
Nova		
MARVEL, 1976		
1	8 ▽	31
2	4	23
3-10	3	
10/35¢	15	
11	3	
11/35¢	15	
12	3	
12/35¢	15	
13	3	
13/35¢	15	
14	3	
14/35¢	15	
15	3	13
16-19	3	
20	3	24
21-22	3	
23	3	18
24-25	3	
NYX		
MARVEL, 2003		
1	9	13
1/Variant	8	
2	7	
2/Variant	5	
3 ➥Wolvie's clone	45 ▽	47
4	9	17
5	4	
6-7	3	
Outer Limits		
DELL, 1964		
1	125 ▽	403
2-5	65	
6-10	50	
11-18	35	
Power Man & Iron Fist		
MARVEL, 1974		
17	8	68
18	5 ▽	35
19	5	36
20	5	31
21-24	4	
25	4	18
26-30	4	
30/30¢	20	
31	4	
31/30¢	20	
32	3	
32/30¢	20	
33	3	
33/30¢	20	
34	3	
34/30¢	20	
35-43	3	
44	3	10
44/35¢	15	
45	3	9
45/35¢	15	
46	3	
46/35¢	15	
47	3	
47/35¢	15	
48	10	36
49-50	6	
51-52	3	
53-55	4	
56	3	
57	12	34
58-65	3	
66 ➥2nd Sabretooth	20	39
67-77	2	
78	5	27
79-83	2	
84 ➥Sabretooth app.	6	22
85-125	2	
Ann 1	4	40
Punisher		
MARVEL, 1986		
1	13 ▽	42
2	7	17
3	7	22
4	6	18
5	6 ▽	21
Saga of the Swamp Thing		
DC, 1982		
1	3	
2-19	2	
20 ➥Alan Moore starts	15	27
21	12	21
22	6	13
23-25	6	
26	4	
27	4	11
28	4	17
29-32	4	
33	3	
34	5	
35-36	3	
37 ➥1st Hellblazer	55	59
38	15	
39-40	9	
41-45	4	
Ann 1	3	
Ann 2	4	
Ann 3	3	
Sandman		
DC, 1974		
1	15 △	48
2	7	23
3-5	4	
6	4	19
Sandman		
DC, 1989		
1	25 △	37
2	12	26
3	12	
4	4	
5	4	13
6-7	4	
8 ➥1st Death	15	50
8/Ltd.	35	
9-14	4	
15-19	3	
19/A	3	15
20-21	3	
22	4	13
23-49	3	
50	5	
50/Gold	20	
51-74	3	
75	4	
Special 1	5	

Joker-Sandman $

Flashback 2001

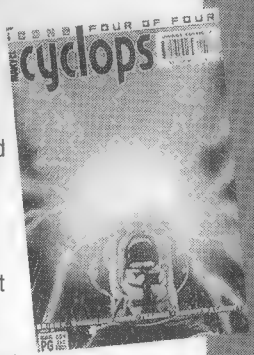
5 years ago in CBG...

#1433 MAY 4 2001

This issue celebrated 60 years of **DC Comics'** ***Starman***, and columnist **Craig "Mr. Silver Age" Shutt** discussed the evolution of the character during that time.

#1434 MAY 11 2001

Michael Chabon's *The Amazing Adventures of Kavalier & Clay* received the Pulitzer Prize for fiction. The novel, about comic-book pioneers **Josef Kavalier** and **Sam Clay**, beat fellow Pulitzer nominees *Blonde* by Joyce Carol Oates and *The Quick and the Dead* by Joy Williams.



#1435 MAY 18 2001

Marvel announced plans for a *Cyclops* mini-series written by **Brian K. Vaughan** and illustrated by **Mark Texeira**, to be published following the relaunch and revamp of its X-titles.

#1436 MAY 25 2001

CBG reported on what has since become a piece of comic-book legend: During a speech prior to the Harvey Awards, veteran writer **Frank Miller** literally tore into *Wizard* at the Pittsburgh Comic-Con, and then called the publication a "bible written by Satan."

— By Ray Sidman
from the Comics Buyer's Guide archives

	205	206	207	208	209	210	211	212	213	214	215	216	217	218	219
				Steve Trevor appears			Origins of tiara, sandals			100 pages		Goes to 25¢	Goes to 50¢	Drops to 25¢	
	Suggestive cover														
	APR 73	JUN 73	AUG 73	OCT 73	DEC 73	FEB 74	APR 74	JUN 74	AUG 74	OCT 74	DEC 74	FEB 75	APR 75	JUN 75	AUG 75
NM Price	$14	$14	$14	$14	$14	$14	$25	$11	$11	$30	$11	$11	$11	$11	$7

Put the Book Back on the Shelf

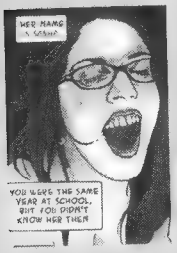


IMAGE
WRITERS:
VARIOUS
ARTISTS:
VARIOUS
COLOR AND B/W
190 Pgs.
$19.99

Image Comics' *Put the Book Back on the Shelf* — subtitled *A Belle & Sebastian Anthology* — should appeal to anyone who's a fan of reality-type books (no spandex-clad superbeings here) and, with its adult themes, is aimed at mature audiences. What helps is if the reader is, first, a fan of comics anthologies and, second, a listener of Belle & Sebastian music, though neither condition is requisite to enjoying this volume.

Released a couple weeks after the Scottish band's album *The Life Pursuit*, this anthology features a huge list of writers and artists giving their interpretations of 24 of the band's pre-Pursuit songs.

It's a grand experiment: replacing a band's aural element with a strictly visual one. Even if you don't recognize the band or the songs, it's easy to recognize the beauty found within many of the stories. As with most anthologies, there are a few stories which don't impress, but the majority have either art or story — or both — pulling the reader right in.

★★★ **— Ray Sidman**

www.imagecomics.com
ISBN: 1-58240-600-6

Savage Tales
MARVEL, 1971

	UNSLABBED Near Mint	SLABBED CGC 9.4 NM
1	150	528
2	32	100
3	20	63
4	20	59
5	12	71
6	10	56
7	10	100
8-9	10	
10	10	35
11	10	
12	8	
Ann 1	25	65

Secret Society of Super-Villains
DC, 1976

1	10	28
2	5	32
3	5	42
4-7	5	
8	5	30
9-15	3	

Secrets of Haunted House
DC, 1975

1	35 ▽	115
2-4	12	
5	18	
6-9	10	
10	10	23
11-15	10	
16-20	6	
21-30	3	
31	5	
32-46	3	

Sensation Comics
DC, 1942

1	27500	
2	5200	
3	2750	
4	1850	
5	1550	
6	1400	
7-10	1140	
11-19	1075	
20	1075	895
21-30	840	
31-34	610	
35-40	560	
41-44	495	
45	495	800
46-50	495	
51-58	455	
59	455	942
60	455	
61-67	395	
68	500	
➥1st Huntress		
69	395	696
70	395	
71	380	
72	380	1569
73-80	380	
81	425	
82-83	385	
84	385	1060
85-90	385	
91-93	190	
94	350	
95-99	190	
100-109	450	

Sgt. Fury
MARVEL, 1963

1	1500	
2	400	
3-5	225	
6-10	150	
11	100	
12	100	374
13	500	1782
➥Cap. America app.		
14	80	290
15	80	
16	75	241
17-18	75	
19	75	197
20-21	50	
22	50	96
23	50	
24	30	
25	50	78
26	50	110
27	50	
28	40	136
29-31	40	
32-38	25	
39	20	78
40	20	57
41	15	50
42	15	35
43-46	15	
47	15	39
48	15	
49	15	52
50	15	48
51	15	
52	15	62
53	15	
54	15	57
55	15	81
56	15	51
57	15	
58	15	38
59	15	69
60	15	56
61-63	15	
64	12	
65	12	41
66-67	12	
68	12	44
69-75	12	
76	12	54
77	12	
78	12	35
79-85	12	
86	12	53
87-99	12	
100	25	113
101	12	
102	10	
103-106	8	
107	8 ▽	53
108-110	8	
111-115	6	
116	6	31
117-121	6	
122-131	5	
132-133	4	
133/30¢	20	
134	4	
134/30¢	20	
135-141	4	
141/35¢	15	
142	4	
142/35¢	15	
143-151	4	
152-167	3	
Ann 1	125	
Ann 2	55	
Ann 3	30	86
Ann 4	22	
Ann 5	10	
Ann 6-7	9	

Shadow
DC, 1973

1	12 ▽	43
2	8	35
3	8	
4	6	33
5	4	15
6	5	
7-12	4	

Shazam!
DC, 1973

1	20 ▽	61
2	10	25
3	10	35
4-7	10	
8	20	64
➥100-page issue		
9-10	10	
11	10	29
12-14	10	
15	10	98
16	10	
17	10	64
18-35	7	

Showcase
DC, 1956

1	3500	
2-3	1000	
4	27500	
➥1st Silver Age Flash		
5	1000	
6	4000	
7	2000	
8	11500	
➥2nd SA Flash		
9	7500	
10	3000	
11-12	1750	
13-14	4500	
15	2000	
16	1000	
17	2750	
➥1st Adam Strange		
18	1200	
19	1500	3125
20	1000	
21	500	
22	5600	
➥1st SA Grn. Lantern		
23-24	1750	
25-26	350	
27	900	
28-29	400	
30	800	
31-32	400	
33	375	
34	1250	
35	700	
36	525	
37	700	
38	400	1026
39	350	
40	300	
41-42	150	
43	450	
44	100	
45	325	
46-47	100	
48-49	80	
50	80	226
51	80	
52	80	313
53-54	100	
55	275	801
➥Dr. Fate origin		
56	125	
57	225	
58	150	308
59	125	445
60	225	694
➥Spectre origin		
61	100	342
62	80	
63	50	
64	100	348
➥Spectre app.		
65	50	
66	30	93
67	30	
68	30	83
69	30	
70	30	168
71	30	
72	30	86
73	85	264
➥1st Creeper		
74	45	146
➥1st Anthro		
75	75	264
➥1st Hawk & Dove		
76	50	145
77	50	
78	35	
79	45	
80	45	399
81	45	159
82	40	148
83	40	128
84	40	
85	20	
86	20	69
87	20	
88-93	15	
94	20	24
➥New Doom Patrol		
95-96	8	
97	6	27
98-99	6	
100	6	30
101	6	23
102	6	
103	6	27
104	5	

Silver Surfer
MARVEL, 1968

1	375 ▽	1093
2	160	351
3	135	555
4	265 △	990
➥Surfer vs. Thor		
5	75 △	277
6	75	293
7	90	366
8	95	372
9	60	252
10	60	226
11	65 △	269
12	50	193
13	70 ▽	318
14	125 ▽	486
➥Spider-Man app		
15	55 ▽	299
16	55 △	218
17	55 ▽	204
18	55	208

Sinister House of Secret Love
DC, 1971

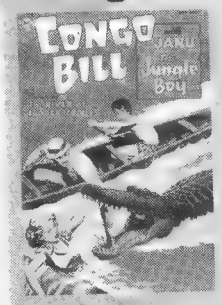
1	125 △	462
2	75	
3	75	251
4	75	237

Six Million Dollar Man
CHARLTON, 1976

1	12 ▲	49
2	6	24
3-5	5	
6-9	4	

RETROVIEW
Congo Bill #2

★★1/2



"The River of 1,000 Crocodiles!" • 8 pp.

Congo Bill and Janu find a way to use thousands of butterflies to defeat a tribe of crocodile "worshippers" — and save themselves from being eaten.

"Have you ever tried to catch a crocodile?" the splash blurb of this cover-featured story asked, apparently figuring Congo Bill had a huge circulation in Florida.

"The Great Jungle Race!" • 6 pp.

Crooks wind up the big losers, as Congo Bill races a zebra against Janu's hyena.

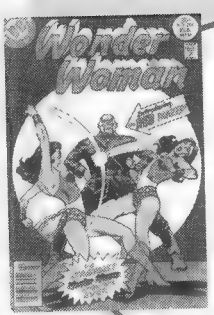
"Elephants' Graveyard!" • 10 pp.

"The Trophy Hunters" • 2 text pp.

DC Comics
Nov 1954
Writer: Uncredited
Pencils: Uncredited
Inks: Uncredited
Cover: Nick Cardy

©DC Comics

Last GDC copy: 8.0 **Then 10¢ NOW $650**



△ #228

Wonder Woman

Back to the past again

Since her Golden Age adventures were more popular than her current-day exploits, DC editors once again focused on the Earth-2 Wonder Woman in World War II with #228 (Feb 77), where she had adventures with her fellow Justice Society of America members.

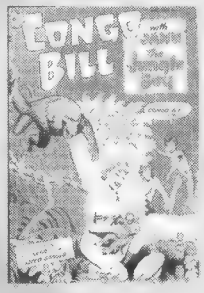
image © 1977 DC

Rejoins JLA ▼ Steve Trevor reborn ▼ Back to WW II ▼

NM Price	220 OCT 75	221 DEC 75	222 FEB 76	223 APR 76	224 JUN 76	225 AUG 76	226 OCT 76	227 DEC 76	228 FEB 77	229 MAR 77
	$7	$7	$7	$7	$7	$7	$7	$7	$7	$7

THE BOTTOM LINE

Congo Bill #3 ★★★



© DC Comics

"The Girl Who Loved Danger!" • 8 pp.

Candy heiress Alva Matson wants to find adventure with Congo Bill but decides a brush with a panther and a baboon are a bit too much for her.

Another "be kind to animals" moral works well in this tale of kindness for a baby baboon and misunderstanding of jungle animals.

"Chota, Television Star!" • 8 pp.

Congo Bill goes ape in a costume to teach the playoff chimp Chota a much-needed lesson.

"The Man Who Hunted Congo Bill!" • 8 pp.

"The Gentle Jungle Killers • 2 text pp.

DC Comics
Jan 1955
Writer: Uncredited
Pencils: Uncredited
Inks: Uncredited
Cover: Nick Cardy

Mint CGC copy: **7.5** **Then 10¢ NOW $500**

Savage-Star

	UNSLABBED Near Mint	SLABBED CGC 9.4 NM
Solar, Man of the Atom		
VALIANT, 1991		
1	7 ▽	16
2	5	13
3	5	18
4-5	5	
6	5	5
7	5	
8	6	
9	6	5
10 ➥1st Eternal Warrior	16 △	33
11	5	
12	4	
13	2	
14	4	
15-16	2	
17-32	1	
33	2	
34-41	1	
42-50	2	
51-56	3	
57-58	4	
59	5	
60	10	
Spawn		
IMAGE, 1992		
1	5 △	15
1/A	3	
2	4 ▽	15
3	3 △	10
4	3	8
5	3	12
6	3	9
7	4	15
8	4	8
9	4	11
10	3 ▽	10
11	3	8
12-17	3	
18	3	12
19	3	
20	3	10
21	3	13
22-24	3	
25	3	17
26-50	3	
51-97	2	
98-99	3	
100/A	6	
100/B-100/F	5	
101-149	3	
150	5	
151-152	3	
Ann 1	5	
Fan ed. 1-3	1	
Special Marvel Edition		
MARVEL, 1971		
1	20	
2	15	54
3-4	15	
5-14	7	
15 ➥1st Shang-Chi	45 ▲	141
16	18	61
Spectacular Spider-Man		
MARVEL, 1968		
1	90	264
2	75 ▽	175
Spectacular Spider-Man		
MARVEL, 1976		
-1	2	7
1	25 ▲	53
2	15	61
3	8	14
4	5	19
5	5	17
6	5	19
7	5	16
7/35¢	15	
8	5	20
8/35¢	15	
9	5	12
9/35¢	15	
10	4	19
10/35¢	15	
11	4	11
11/35¢	15	
12	4	12
13-17	4	
18	4	22
19	4	
20	4	13
21-22	3	
23	3	22
24-26	3	
27 ➥1st Miller Daredevil	15	44
28 ➥2nd Miller Daredevil	15	36
29-33	3	
34	3	14
35-41	3	
42	3	17
43	3	
44	3	10
45-48	3	
49	3	10
50	3	18
51-55	3	
56	5	
57	3	
58	3	20
59-63	3	
64 ➥1st Cloak & Dagger	5	22
65-82	3	
83 ➥Punisher app	7	23
84	3	
85	5	16
86-89	3	
90	3	15
91-99	3	
100	5	
101	3	
102-115	2	
116	3	13
117-129	2	
130	3	
131	5	
132	4	
133	3	
134-135	2	
136	2	11
137-138	2	
139	2	13
140-142	2	
143	4	18
144-146	2	
147 ➥New Hobgoblin	8	
148	2	
149	3	
150-151	2	
152	2	11
153-156	2	
157	2	11
158	5	
159	4	
160-188	2	
189	4	12
190-195	2	
195/Collector's	3	
196-199	2	
200	4 ▽	19
201-213	2	
213/Collector's	3	
214-217	2	
217/Variant	3	
218-219	2	
220-221	3	
222	2	
223-223/Variant	3	
224	2	
225	5 ▽	20
225/Variant	4	
226-228	2	
229	3	
229/Variant-230	4	
231-249	2	
250	3	
251-255	2	
255/Variant	5	
256-263	2	
Ann 1	5	24
Ann 2	4	
Ann 3-7	3	
Ann 8	4	
Ann 9-'97	3	
Special 1	4	
Spectacular Spider-Man		
MARVEL, 2003		
1	4	
1/CanExpo	6	
2-3	3	
4	4	
5-7	3	
8-13	2	
14	3	
15 ➥Avngrs Disassmbled	7	
16 ➥Avngrs Disassmbled	5	
17-19	2	
20 ➥Organic webshooters	3	
21-27	2	
Spectre		
DC, 1967		
1	150	538
2	60	159
3	50	156
4	50	160
5	50	170
6	40	130
7	40	148
8	40	157
9	40	137
10	40	136
Spider-Man		
MARVEL, 1990		
-1	2	
½	4	12
½/Platinum	6	
1	5 △	19
1/CG-1/Collector's	5	
1/Platinum	42 ▽	126
1/Silver	5	
2	3	17
3	3	31
4	3	
5	3	12
6	3	13
7	3	12
8	3	26
9	6	27
10	4	14
11	3	9
12	3	
13	5	19
14	3	
15	2	
16	2	11
17-25	2	
26	4	12
27-43	2	
44	2	8
45-46	2	
46/Collector's	3	
47-49	2	
50	3	
50/Variant	4	
51-51/Variant	3	
52-56	2	
57-57/Variant	3	
58-74	2	
75	4	
76-98/B	2	
Ann '97-'98	3	
GS 1	4	
Holiday '95	3	
Spider-Woman		
MARVEL, 1978		
1	6 △	26
2	3	15
3	3	
4	2	13
5-36	2	
37 ➥1st Siryn	4	23
38 ➥X-Men app	4 ▽	16
39-49	1	
50	4	14
Star Trek		
GOLD KEY, 1967		
1	350	
2	125	
3	100	
4	90	
5	75	
6	75	403
7	60	
8-9	50	
10	40	
11	30	
12	30	71
13	30	104
14	30	170
15	30	60
16-21	30	
22	30	74
23	30	
24-26	25	
27-38	20	
39	20	83
40	20	
41-43	15	
44	15	50
45-47	15	
48	15	66
49-52	15	
53	15	48
54-59	15	
60-61	12	
Star Trek		
MARVEL, 1980		
1	5 ▽	17
2	3	9
3-17	2	
18	2	21
Star Wars		
MARVEL, 1977		
1	20 ▽	69
1/35¢	800	6552
1/2nd	4 ▽	69
2	10 ▽	29
2/35¢	150	
3	8	25
3/35¢	150	
4	7	25
4/35¢	150	
5	7	34
5/2nd	7	34
6	7	22
6/2nd	7	22

Flashback 1996

10 years ago in CBG...

#1172 MAY 3 1996

Cerebus creator **Dave Sim** provided the guest editorial for this issue, discussing why self-publishers shy away from publishing houses.

#1173 MAY 10 1996

Batman Group Editor **Dennis O'Neil** announced that he and the creators of every **Batman** title decided upon a one-year moratorium on crossovers, starting in July following the conclusion of the "Legacy" crossover. Furthermore, the moratorium promised that at least one Bat-title per month would have a Done in One issue.

#1174 MAY 17 1996

The pornography trial against **Planet Comics** of Oklahoma City took another major step as the pornography charge was dropped, and the four felony and three misdemeanors were lowered to six misdemeanor counts against former owners **John Hunter** and **Michael Kennedy**, three of which did not call for imprisonment. By this time, however, the two had already closed their store, and Kennedy had lost his wife and his house as a result of the charges.

#1175 MAY 24 1996

CBG reporter **George Hagenauer** reported on the upcoming **Chicago Comicon** art auction benefitting Literacy Chicago. Hagenauer was one of the event's organizers.

#1176 MAY 31 1996

Fantastic Four #400 received the best comic-book cover of the year award from *Magazine & Bookseller*. Runners up were ***X-Men Alpha*** and ***Superman*** #100.

— By Ray Sidman
from the Comics Buyer's Guide archives

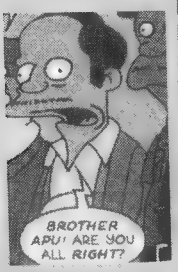
Cheetah appears · Goes to 35¢ · Dr. Mid-Nite appears · Origin retold; 1st Kung · Golden Age Flash appears · Spectre appears

	230 APR 77	231 MAY 77	232 JUN 77	233 JUL 77	234 AUG 77	235 SEP 77	236 OCT 77	237 NOV 77	238 DEC 77	239 JAN 78	240 FEB 78	241 MAR 78	242 APR 78	243 MAY 78	244 JUN 78
NM Price	$7	$7	$7	$7	$7	$7	$7	$6	$6	$6	$6	$6	$6	$6	$6

PRICE GUIDE KEY: OTHER GRADES — **Unslabbed (loose) Very Fine/Near Mint** is **5/6** (83%) of the unslabbed NM price above · **Very Fine (VF)** is **2/3** (67%) of NM · **Fine (F)** is **1/3** (33%) of NM · **Very Good (VG)** is **1/5** (20%) of NM · **Good (G)** is **1/8** (12.5%) of NM

Simpsons Classics #6

Simpsons Classics #6 offers four oversized reprint stories from the original comic-book series and a cover gallery and an amusing centerfold depicting a gigantic Montgomery Burns chasing after the sitcom family.



BONGO
WRITERS:
VARIOUS
ARTISTS:
VARIOUS
COLOR • 64 PGS.
$3.99

First in the foursome of funnies is "Fan-Tasty Island," in which Homer "wins" a family trip to the remote island of Wannasi and unwittingly smuggles home a pollutant desired by his boss. Next up is "Apu's Incredible 96 Hour Shift," a tale of the intrepid Kwik-E Mart manager being robbed at gunpoint while running his beloved store. Then, there's "Fallen Flanders," which finds Ned Flanders getting lost while camping, only to come back a few weeks later behaving in an ungodly manner. The final entry is "The Kwik-E and the Dead," a Western comedy wherein Homer wins a card game and unwittingly (there's that word again) becomes the new sheriff in town.

A 64-magazine-sized-pages issue with no ads for a mere four bucks is a bargain, especially since the material is about as funny as an average episode of the actual TV show.

★★★ — **Brett Weiss**

Star Wars
CONTINUED

	UNSLABBED Near Mint	SLABBED CGC 9.4 NM
7	7	20
8	7	10
9	7	16
10	7	21
11	7	14
12	7	
13	7	23
14	7	23
15-16	7	
17	7	23
18	7	
19	7	8
20	6	9
21	6	21
22	5	
23	5	18
24	4	
25	4	18
26	4	31
27	4	
28	4	10
29	4	26
30-31	4	
32	4	9
33	4	12
34	4	9
35	4	11
36-38	4	
39	4	28
40	4	27
41	4	14
42	4	24
43	4	11
44	4	13
45-47	4	
48	4	11
49	5	
50-53	4	
54	4	20
55-63	4	
64	4	11
65-67	4	
68	4	31
69-70	4	
71	4	16
72	4	13
73	4	13
74	4	15
75	4	11
76	4	
77	4	15
78	4	
79	4	12
80	4	
81	4	27
82-83	4	
84	4	15
85	4	15
86	4	15
87	4	
88	4	19
89	4	14
90-91	4	
92	4	12
93-95	4	
96	4	11
97	4	
98	4	16
99	4	
100	4	13
101	4	16
102	4	13
103-106	4	
107	25	71
➥Low distribution		
Ann 1	8	24
Ann 2	5	14
Ann 3	5	

Strange Tales
MARVEL, 1951

1	2750	
2	800	
3-5	700	
6-10	550	
11-20	350	
21-30	275	
31-44	225	
45-58	200	
59	225	
60	200	
61	225	
62-63	175	
64	200	
65-66	175	
67-78	200	
79	250	
80	200	
81-83	175	
84	200	
85-88	175	
89	400	
➥Kirby Fin Fang Foom		
90-92	175	
93-96	150	
97	350	
➥Aunt May & Uncle Ben		
98-100	150	
101	900	
➥Human Torch starts		
102	425	1463
➥Human Torch app.		
103-104	300	
105	300	2326
106	225	
107	250	
108	225	
109	225	751
110	1250	8276
➥1st Dr. Strange		
111	350	
112-113	150	
114	350	2245
115	450	
➥Dr. Strange origin		
116	125	
117-118	100	
119-121	125	
122	125	516
123	125	593
124-125	75	
126	90	
127	75	
128	75	491
129	75	382
130	90	359
131	75	
132	75	498
133	75 △	398
134	75	
135	125	
➥1st S.H.I.E.L.D.		
136	75	263
137	50	
138	50	110
139-142	50	
143	50	129
144	50	125
145-146	50	
147	50	90
148	75	180
➥Ancient One origin		
149	50	99
150	50	131
151	75	156
152	50	140
153	50	
154	50	134
155	50	
156	50	123
157	50	
158	50	149
159	60	229
160	50	162
161	50	186
162	50	121
163	50	149
164	50	
165	50	123
166	50	
167	50 ▽	259
168	50	140
169	15 ▽	89
➥Series restarted		
170	10	
171	7	
172	7	31
173	7	
174	7	11
175-177	7	
178	15	46
179	10	40
➥Warlock origin		
180	10	40
181	10	37
182	3	20
183-185	3	
185/30¢	20	
186	3	
186/30¢	20	
187-188	3	
Ann 1	325	
Ann 2	350	

Sub-Mariner
MARVEL, 1968

1	125 △	332
2	45 △	126
3	35	154
4	35	
5	30	245
6	25	103
7	25	102
8	75	267
➥vs. The Thing		
9	30	123
10	25	
11	20	104
12	20	101
13	20	101
14	50	177
➥Toro dies		
15	20	
16	20	63
17-21	20	
22	20 △	76
23	20	84
24	20	75
25	20	69
26	20	70
27	20	53
28	20	51
29	20	54
30	20	79
31	15	47
32	15	48
33	15	
34	70	242
➥Hulk, Surfer app.		
35	35	172
➥Hulk, Surfer app.		
36	15	48
37	15	50
38	15	51
39	15	
40	15	63
41	10	45
42	10	
43	10	104
44	10	83
45	10	48
46	10	73
47	10	85
48	10	83
49	10	44
50	10	40
51-53	10	
54	10 ▽	54
55-56	10	
57	10	67
58	10 ▽	52
59	10 △	79
60	10	43
61	10	
62	10 ▽	33
63	10	38
64	10	31
65	10	42
66	10	
67	10	55
68	10	33
69	10	63
70	10	29
71	10	43
72	10	
Special 1	10	90
Special 2	15	

Superboy
DC, 1949

1	7000	17
2	2000	
3	1500	
4-5	1000	
6	800	2650
7-10	800	
11-15	600	
16-20	450	
21-30	350	
31-38	275	
39-50	225	
51-60	175	
61-67	125	
68	500	
➥1st Bizarro		
69-77	100	
78	175	
➥Mxyzptlk origin		
79	100	
80	150	
➥Meets Supergirl		
81-85	90	
86	200	
➥Legion app.		
87-88	90	
89	275	
➥1st Mon-El		
90-93	90	
94-97	75	
98	100	
99	75	
100	175	
➥Phtm. Zone villains		
101-120	60	
121-128	50	
129	75	
130-135	40	
136	40	143
137	40	
138	55	
➥Giant-sized		
139-140	40	
141-142	35	
143	35	124
144-146	35	
147	50	
➥Saturn Girl origin		
148	25	
149	25	65
150-152	25	
153	25	85
154-155	25	
156	65	221
➥Giant-size		
157-159	25	
160	25	58
161	25	
162	25	19
163-164	25	

RETROVIEW

Congo Bill #4

★★★½

"Hunter of Jungle Sounds!" • 8 pp.

A man from a museum seek out sounds such as the laugh of a hyena, the hiss of a cobra, and the snore of a rhino, but Congo Bill makes the big noise to capture a "'jungle hood."

Here's an intriguing example of how DC's writers could cram more plot, fun, and jungle lore into eight pages than any other potted-palm publishers.

"Safari in the Sky!" • 8 pp.

Congo Bill decides to use balloons in a clever takeoff on the Noah's Ark story.

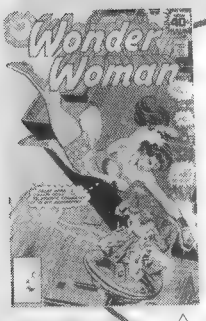
"The Spotted Leopard Strikes Again!" • 6 pp.

"Menace of the Crocodiles!" • 2 pp.

"Africa's Greatest Hunters" • 2 text pp.

DC Comics
Mar 1955
Writer: Uncredited
Pencils: Uncredited
Inks: Uncredited
Cover: Nick Cardy

Last CGC copy: 4.5 **Then 10¢ NOW $325**



△ #255

Image © 1978 DC

Wonder Woman

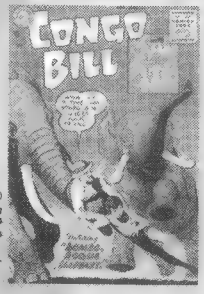
The Whitman difference

In the late 1970s, Western Printing & Lithographing added its Whitman logo to extra copies of many comics, including *Wonder Woman*, for distribution in bagged three-packs. These variants were published in low numbers, making them more collectible today.

	Goes to 50¢	Steve dies again	Hawkgirl appears	Drops to 40¢	Whitman variant		Whitman variant	
245 JUL 78	**246** AUG 78	**247** SEP 78	**248** OCT 78	**249** NOV 78	**250** DEC 78	**250/Whit** DEC 78	**251** JAN 79	**251/Whit** JAN 79	**252** FEB 79
NM Price $6	$6	$6	$6	$6	$6	$12	$6	$12	$6

THE BOTTOM LINE

Congo Bill #5 ★★★



© DC Comics

"Bombo, Rogue Elephant!" • 6 pp.

Congo Bill pretends to kill a rogue elephant in order to capture crooks who are seeking a "map of hidden loot taped around Bombo's tusk!"

Handy jungle lore from DC: "A charging elephant curls up his trunk — only a frightened or hurt beast keeps its trunk extended!"

"The Return of Prince Padhan!" • 8 pp.

"The Sun-Born Mountain Man" • 4 pp.

"The Mysterious Jungle!" • 8 pp.

DC Comics
May 1955
Writer: Uncredited
Pencils: Uncredited
Inks: Uncredited
Cover: Nick Cardy

Post CGC copy: 4.5 Then 10c NOW $325

	UNSLABBED Near Mint	SLABBED CGC 9.4 NM
165	50	
➥Giant-size		
166-168	25	
169-173	20	
174	30	132
175-178	20	
179	15	50
➥Giant-sized		
180	15	38
181	15	56
182	20	75
183	12	40
184	12	44
185	12	178
186	12	
187	12	40
188-191	12	
192	12	40
193	12	25
194	12	
195	12	39
196	12	
197	20	
➥Legion stones start		
198-199	12	
200	15	
201	12	
202	30	94
203	12	
204	12	32
205	40	133
206-207	12	
208	15	43
209	10	
210	15	
211-212	10	
213	7	27
214	7	
215	7	42
216-219	7	
220	7	25
221	7	
222-223	5	
224	5	32
225	5	
226	5	14
227-230	5	
Ann 1	175	
SP 1	4	

Superman
DC, 1939

1	160000	
2	16000	
3	9200	
4	6500	
5	6000	
6-7	3500	
8-10	2850	
11-13	2200	
14	4500	
➥U.S. flag cover		
15	2050	
16-20	1650	
21	1500	
22-23	1100	
24	1400	
25	1050	
26	1250	
27-29	950	
30	1350	6675
➥1st Mr. Mxyzptlk		
31-40	825	
41-43	650	
44	650	2300
45-50	650	
51-52	525	
53	1800	
➥Superman origin		
54-60	500	
61	1000	
➥1st Kryptonite		
62-70	475	
71-75	450	
76	1100	
➥Batman team-up		
77-80	400	
81-90	375	
91-95	360	
96-99	325	
100	1500	
101-110	280	
111-120	240	
121-130	195	
131-139	155	
140	175	
➥1st Bizarro Jr.		
141-145	115	
146	160	
➥Superman origin		
147	135	
148	115	
149	125	
➥Legion app.		
150-161	68	
162-178	58	
179	58	283
180	58	
181-183	55	
184	55	214
185-186	55	
187	60	
188	55	
189	55	245
190	55	
191	55	225
192	55	157
193	60	275
194-195	55	
196	55	271
197-198	55	
199	180	
➥1st race with Flash		
200	60	254
201	24	
202	30	201
203-209	24	
210	24	150
211	24	146
212	50	
➥Superbabies		
213-215	24	
216	24 ▽	102
217	30	261
218-221	20	
222	30	209
223-225	20	
226	20	124
227	30	
228-231	20	
232	30	
233	40	362
➥Kryptonite destroyed		
234	18	
235	18	96
236	18	118
237	18 ▽	91
238	18	76
239	30	117
➥Giant-sized		
240	18 △	76
241	18	66
242	18	149
243	18	109
244	18	
245	22	
246	18	
247	18	91
248	18	88
249	18	94
250	18	69
251	18	
252	60	300
➥100-page issue		
253	18 ▽	81
254	22	
255	9	41
256-257	9	
258	9	43
259	9	44
260	9	55
261	9	60
262	9	
263	9	44
264	9	
265	8	45
266	8	
267	8	35
268	8	32
269	8	34
270	8	27
271	8	41
272	20	112
➥100-page issue		
273	7	35
274	7	47
275	7 △	28
276	7	36
277	7	
278	17	89
➥100-page issue		
279-281	5	
282	5	41
283	5	48
284	7	
285	5	
286	5 △	27
287-291	4	
292	4	34
293-294	3	
295	3	35
296-299	3	
300	11	54
301-316	3	
317	3 △	64
318-348	3	
349	3	18
350	3	
351-399	2	
400	5	19
401-422	2	
423	5	20
Ann 1	600	
Ann 2	325	
Ann 3	210	
Ann 4	180	
Ann 5	105	
Ann 6	90	
Ann 7	62	
Ann 8	46	
Ann 9-10	5	
Ann 11	4	50
Ann 12	3	
Special 1-3	4	

Superman
DC, 1987

0	3	
1	4	14
2	4	
3-5	3	
6-8	2	
9	4	
10-49	2	
50	4	15
51-52	2	
53	3	
54-72	2	
73	3	
74	4	
75	5	
➥Death of Superman		
75/Collector's	12	29
75/Platinum	40	58
76-77	3	
78	2	
78/Collector's	3	
79-82	2	
82/Variant	4	
83-99	2	
100	3	
100/Variant	4	
101-122	2	
123	3	
123/Variant	5	
124-150	2	
150/Variant	4	
151-170	2	
171	4	
172-174	2	
175	4	
176-190	2	
190/A	4	
191	2	
192	3	
193-199	2	
200	4	
201	8	
202	2	
203	6	9
➥Lee sketchbook		
204	4	10
204/Sketch 250 ▽		140
205/Lee	4	
205/Turner	3	
206-207	3	
208	5	
209	4	
210-215	3	
216	5	
➥Inf. Crisis tie		
217	7	
➥OMAC app.		
218	5	
219	6	
➥Sacrifice Pt. 1		
219/2nd-226	3	
1000000	4	
1000000/Ltd.	15	
Ann 1	4	
Ann 2-6	3	
Ann 7	4	
Ann 8-11	3	
Ann 12	4	
GS 1-2	5	
GS 3	6	
Special 1	4	
3D 1	5	

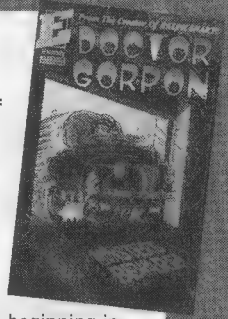
Superman/ Batman
DC, 2003

1	8 ▽	22
1/Retailer ed.	125	321
1/2nd-1/3rd.	4	
2	6	24
3	5	21
3/2nd	3	
4	4	
5	3	
6	4	
7	3	
8	10	
➥1st new Supergirl		
8/4th	3	
9	5	15
9/2nd	4	
9/3rd	3	
10	5	9
10/2nd	4	
11	5	
12	4	
13	5	
13/Supergirl	7	
14	5	
15	4	
16	5	
17	4	
18	3	
19	4	
20	3	
21	4	
22-23	3	

Star-Super $

Flashback 1991

15 years ago in CBG...

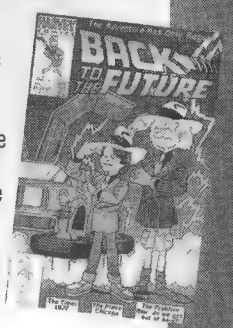


#911 MAY 3 1991

Eternity Comics announced the addition of ***Doctor Gorpon*** to its line-up in a three-issue series. *Ralph Snart* creator **Marc Hansen** was to write and illustrate it.

#912 MAY 10 1991

Fantagraphics Books unveiled its plan to permit returns on select titles beginning in July. The publisher said the decision came in response to retailers' suggestions.



#913 MAY 17 1991

From big screen to comic book: **Harvey Comics Entertainment** added the ***Back to the Future*** license to its comic-book publications. The series was done in conjunction with the animated television series on **CBS**, set to launch in the fall. Harvey Comics announced the first issue would ship July 2.

#914 MAY 24 1991

CBG reported the death of **Graham Ingels**, known for his work as **EC** horror artist, especially between 1950 and 1955. Ingels died in Florida at age 75. His art appeared in such titles as *The Haunt of Fear*, *The Vault of Horror*, and *Tales from the Crypt*.

#915 MAY 31 1991

The titles ***Nexus*** and ***Next Men*** went to Dark Horse Comics. The former, a series by **Mike Baron** and **Steve Rude**, went to the publisher as its third home, while the latter, written by **John Byrne**, was a new series.

— By Ray Sidman
from the Comics Buyer's Guide archives

	Whitman variant		Fights Angle Man		Whitman variant	Fights Royal Flush Gang	Whitman variant		Whitman variant		Whitman variant		Whitman variant		Whitman variant
	252/Whit FEB 79	253 MAR 79	254 APR 79	255 MAY 79	255/Whit MAY 79	256 JUN 79	256/Whit JUN 79	257 JUL 79	257/Whit JUL 79	258 AUG 79	258/Whit AUG 79	259 SEP 79	259/Whit SEP 79	260 OCT 79	260/Whit OCT 79
NM Price	$12	$6	$6	$6	$12	$6	$12	$6	$12	$6	$12	$6	$12	$6	$12

PRICE GUIDE KEY: OTHER GRADES **Unslabbed (loose) Very Fine/Near Mint** is **5/6** (83%) of the unslabbed NM price above **Fine (F)** is **1/3** (33%) of NM **Very Good (VG)** is **1/5** (20%) of NM **Very Fine (VF)** is **2/3** (67%) of NM **Good (G)** is **1/8** (12.5%) of NM

Territory 51

Potential readers may recall the title of this cleverly conceived comic from last year, when the opening chapter about an alien craft crashing in the desert in 1873 was first released. That chapter along with the unreleased second issue compose this trade paperback that came out earlier this year. And it was worth waiting for.

LAW DOG
WRITER:
JAMES HEFFRON
ARTISTS:
HEFFRON, CHRIS MARRINAN
Color • 96 Pgs.
$12.95

James Heffron's idea is one of those why-didn't-I-think-of-that concepts, and he executes it simply and cleanly without clutter or distracting subplots. The art team of Heffron, Chris Marrinan, and colorist Chad Fidler creates some illustrations that are absolutely breathtaking in spots and no worse than competent in others.

The last third of the book is mostly extraneous, packed with pages of such usual filler as the story's script, character bios, concept sketches, *etc.* Those who fall in love with the story might enjoy these bonuses, but those who get more casual enjoyment out of it would have been happier with a thinner, cheaper volume. Or, better yet, a third chapter of this enticing story, which alone is worth this book's cost.

★★★ — **Jim Johnson**

www.lawdogcomics.com
ISBN: 0-9764125-0-0

	UNSLABBED Near Mint	SLABBED CGC 9.4 NM
Swamp Thing		
DC, 1972		
1	60 △	239
2	30	110
3	20	71
4	20	66
5	15	76
6	15 ▽	58
7	12 △	79
8	10	46
9	10	45
10	10	53
11	5	37
12	5	30
13	5	
14	5	49
15	5	33
16	5	31
17	5	28
18	5	29
19	5	
20	5	32
21-23	5	
24	5	30
Tales From the Crypt		
E C, 1950		
20	775	
21	900	
22	700	
23	520	1381
24-25	520	
26-29	400	
30	400	875
31	460	
32	300	888
33	675	1338
➥Crypt Keeper origin		
34-46	295	
Tales of Suspense		
MARVEL, 1959		
1	1400	
2	540	
3	475	
4	450	
5-10	325	
11-20	240	
21-32	150	
33-38	135	
39	3500	
➥1st Iron Man		
40	1100	
41	650	
42	325	2125
43-45	325	
46	210	
➥1st Crimson Dynamo		
47	210	1776
48	265	1566
➥1st red/gold armor		
49	210	
50	155	
51	105	
52	140	
53	120 ▽	760
➥Watcher origin		
54-56	62	
57	170	2088
58	210	1191
➥Cap America app.		
59	210 △	1263
➥Cap stories start		
60	120	
61	82	532
62	82	
63	180	1018
➥Bucky origin		
64	72	449
65	125	746
66	125	550
➥Red Skull origin		
67	52	
68	52	336
69	52	
70	52	284
71	42	241
72-73	42	
74	42 ▽	140
75	42	146
76	42	180
77	42	186
78-79	42	
80	42	167
81	32	215
82	32	172
83	32	170
84	32	
85	32	166
86	32	162
87	32	182
88	32	178
89	32	131
90	32	205
91	32	146
92	32	156
93	32	200
94	32	177
95	32	214
96	32	169
97	32	175
98	32	186
99	32	184
Tales of the Unexpected		
DC, 1956		
1	750	
2	385	
3	275	
4-5	225	
6-10	165	
11-20	125	
21-30	100	
31-39	85	
40	650	
➥Space Ranger starts		
41-42	275	
43	450	
➥Space Ranger cover		
44-45	200	
46-50	150	
51-55	125	
56-60	100	
61-70	85	
71-74	60	
75	50	140
76-82	50	
83-90	30	
91-100	22	
101-104	20	
➥Becomes Unexpected		
Tales of the Zombie		
MARVEL, 1973		
1	25	
2	18	
3	15	40
4	15	51
5	15	
6-10	10	
Ann 1	15	
Tales to Astonish		
MARVEL, 1959		
1	2000	
2	635	
3-5	440	
6-10	355	
11-20	265	
21-26	200	
27	3600	
➥1st Hank Pym		
28-34	175	
35	1900	
➥1st Ant-Man		
36	625	
37-38	350	
39	350	1068
40	350	
41	230	1223
42-43	230	
44	500	2676
➥1st Wasp		
45-46	150	
47	150	706
48	150	
49	250	866
➥1st Giant Man		
50	95	591
51	95	311
52	95	
53	95	475
54	95	
55	95	383
56	95	
57	125	1169
➥Spider-Man app.		
58	95	
59	150	1088
➥Giant-Man vs. Hulk		
60	175	1563
➥Hulk stories start		
61	75	800
62	90	411
➥1st Leader		
63	75	397
64	75	
65	75	496
66	70	
67	70	361
68	70	
69	70	294
70	100	307
➥Namor stories start		
71	55	162
72	55	220
73-74	55	
75	55	157
76	55 △	164
77-78	55	
79	55	212
80	55	155
81	55	207
82	78	
➥Iron Man app.		
83	55	209
84	55	145
85	55	172
86	55	140
87	55 ▽	143
88	55	195
89	55	141
90	55	197
91	52 △	174
92	75	155
➥Silver Surfer app.		
93	75	449
➥Silver Surfer app.		
94	50	136
95	50	168
96	50	131
97	50	176
98	50 △	143
99	50	
100	75	159
101	85	205
Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles		
MIRAGE, 1984		
1	300	1055
1/Counterfeit	2	
2	28 ▽	89
2/Counterfeit	2	
3	15	53
3/Misprint	15	
4	12 ▽	54
5	4	
6	3	
7	5	
8	4	
9-10	3	
11	4	
12-15	3	
16-62	2	
Teen Titans		
DC, 1966		
1	260 ▽	569
2	100	166
3	40	195
4	40	
5	40	148
6-7	32	
8	32	140
9	32	129
10	32	239
11-16	28	
17	28	187
18	33	97
19-20	33	
21	33	202
22	33	
23	18	
24	18	206
25	18	
26	12	254
27-30	12	
31	20	
32	18	73
33	18	108
34-35	18	
36	18	103
37	18	114
➥Giant-sized		
38	18	83
39-40	12	
41	12	80
42-43	12	
44	7	24
45-47	7	
48	12	21
➥1st Harlequin		
49	7	
50	20	
➥Batgirl returns		
51-52	6	
53	6 ▽	34
Thor		
MARVEL, 1966		
126	125	
127	45	313
128	45	220
129	45	175
130	45	243
131	45	210
132	45 △	74
133	45	163
134	45	184
135	45	170
136	45	
137	45	230
138	45	120
139	45	121
140	45	150
141	32 △	162
142	32	168
143	32	221
144	32	136
145	32	127
146	32	134
147	32	130
148	32	159
149	32	125
150	32	207
151	32	104

△ #271

Wonder Woman

Another fighting female

Beginning with *Wonder Woman* #271 (Sep 80), The Huntress began a series of back-up tales. The daughter of Earth-2's Batman and Catwoman, Helena Wayne used the best abilities of both her parents and, later, teamed with The Justice Society.

image © 1980 DC

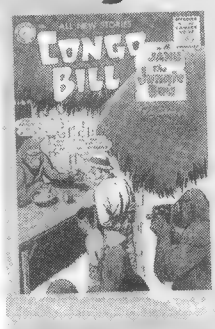
THE BOTTOM LINE

	Whitman variant	Fights Bushmaster	Whitman variant	Whitman variant	Whitman variant
	261 NOV 79	261/Whit NOV 79	262 DEC 79	262/Whit DEC 79	263 JAN 80
NM Price	$5	$15	$5	$10	$5

	263/Whit JAN 80	264 FEB 80	264/Whit FEB 80	265 MAR 80	266 APR 80
NM Price	$15	$5	$10	$5	$5

RETROVIEW
Congo Bill #6

★★★



DC Comics
Jul 1955
Writer: Uncredited
Pencils: Uncredited
Inks: Uncredited
Cover: Nick Cardy

"Gorilla City!" • 8 pp.

Congo Bill and Janu find a village inhabited by talking gorillas — who turn out to be Martians who flee in a spaceship because they feel Earthlings are unfriendly!

This is one of the best of the gorilla covers — irresistible to both readers and collectors who appreciate this DC specialty.

"Bombo — the Rage of London!" • 8 pp.

Bombo the Rogue Elephant returns in time to make a hair-raising trip to London.

"The Jungle Trolley Car!" • 6 pp.

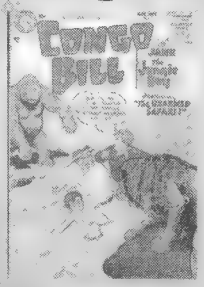
"The World's Greatest Hunters" • 4 pp.

"Unseen Dangers of the Jungle" • 2 text pp.

© DC Comics

Buy a copy 9.0 Then 16¢ NOW $325

Congo Bill #7 ★★★



© DC Comics

"The Boy Who Played Janu!" • 8 pp.

Janu and Mickey Collins, a boy hired to play Janu in a movie, become jealous rivals until both use their talents to foil villainy.

An excellent example of DC's ability to generate human interest, this is one of the most believable of the Congo Bill epics.

"The Unarmed Safari!" • 8 pp.

It's Bombo the Elephant to the rescue, when Congo Bill is disarmed.

"The Underwater Big Game Hunter!" • 8 pp.

"How to Catch a Lion" • 2 text pp.

DC Comics
Sep 1955
Writer: Uncredited
Pencils: Uncredited
Inks: Uncredited
Cover: Nick Cardy

For CGC copy: **8.0** **Then 10c NOW $450**

	UNSLABBED Near Mint	SLABBED CGC 9.4 NM
152	32	99
153	32	127
154	32	85
155	32	108
156	32	71
157	32 ▲	112
158	32 △	174
159	32 ▲	122
160	32	136
161	25	103
162	25	101
163	25	101
164	25	104
165	40 △	238
➥Warlock app.		
166	36	173
167	24 ▽	140
168	36	
➥Galactus origin		
169	36	146
➥Galactus origin		
170	20	70
171	20	95
172	20	84
173	20	76
174	20	95
175	20	73
176	20	86
177	20	95
178	18	
179	18	64
180	24	117
➥Thor vs. Mephisto		
181	23	111
182	12 ▽	65
183	12	
184	12	73
185	12	85
186	12	
187	12	114
188	12	71
189	12	
190	12	56
191	12	58
192	12	64
193	55	286
➥Silver Surfer app		
194	12 △	47
195	12	66
196-198	12	
199	12	49
200	16	90
201	9	63
202	9	44
203	9	
204	9	46
205	9	
206-207	7	
208	7	37
209	7	41
210	7	63
211	7	45
212-215	7	
216	7	29
217-220	7	
221	7	77
222	7	31
223-224	7	
225	14	111
➥1st Firelord		
226	7	43
227	5	23
228	5	24
229	5	19
230	5	23
231	5 △	23
232	5	33
233	5 △	23
234	5	20
235	5	17
236	5	
237	5	21
238	5	17
239	5	25
240-241	5	
242	5	17
243-245	5	
246	5	13
247-248	5	
249	5	26
250	5	16
251	5	23
252-253	5	
254	5	22
255-259	5	
260	5	21
260/35¢	15	
261	5	16
261/35¢	15	
262	5	
262/35¢	15	
263	5	
263/35¢	15	
264	5	
264/35¢	15	
265	3	
266	3	18
267-289	3	
290	3	11
291-299	3	
300	8	
301-336	2	
337	7	31
➥1st Beta Ray Bill		
338	3	
339	5	15
340	4	
341	3	
342	4	
343-348	2	
349	3	
350-373	2	
374	3	
375-400	2	
401-410	1	
411	3	
412	2	15
413-431	1	
432-433	2	
434-449	1	
450	3	
451-473	1	
474-475	2	
475/Variant	3	
476-481	2	
482	3	
483-499	2	
500	3	
501-502	2	
Ann 2	65	327
Ann 3	12	
Ann 4	10	
Ann 5-6	8	
Ann 7	7	24
Ann 8	6	
Ann 9-10	4	
Ann 11	4	14
Ann 12	4	
Ann 13-19	3	

Tomb of Dracula
MARVEL, 1972

1	100 △	348
2	35 ▽	117
3	35	118
4	30	103
5	18	50
6	18	99
7	15	76
8	12	45
9	12 △	48
10	100 △	358
➥1st Blade		
11	10	75
12	12	83
13	35	122
14	12	55
15	10	41
16	10	51
17	12	39
18	10	53
19	12	52
20	10	50
21	10	59
22	8	45
23	8	34
24	8	40
25	8	47
26	8	55
27	8	40
28	8	48
29	8	28
30	10	46
31	8	41
32	8	36
33	7	31
34	7	32
35	7	39
36	7	34
37	7	34
38	7	32
39	7	
40	7	36
41	7	33
42	6	27
43	6	26
43/30¢	18	
44	6	
44/30¢	18	
45	6	36
45/30¢	18	
46	6	23
46/30¢	18	
47	6	23
47/30¢	18	
48	6	23
49	6	
50	10	54
51	6	31
52	6	28
53	6	30
54	6	23
55	6	
56	6	31
57	6	23
57/35¢	12	
58	6	28
58/35¢	12	
59	6	
59/35¢	12	
60	6	29
60/35¢	12	
61	5	23
62	5	23
63	5 ▽	23
64	5	24
65	5	23
66	5	
67	5 ▽	30
68	5	40
69	5	31
70	8 ▽	35

Tower of Shadows
MARVEL, 1969

1	55 ▽	255
2	25	
3	25	67
4-5	25	
6	15	54
7-8	15	
9	8	
Special 1	22	86

Transformers
MARVEL, 1984

1	10	42
2	5	12
3	5	24
4	3	16
5	3	20
6	3	20
7	3	
8	3	20
9	3	15
10	3	20
11	3	
12	3	14
13	3	13
14-18	3	
19	3	8
20	3	
21-39	2	
40	2	1
41-45	2	
46	2	1
47-55	2	
56	2	23
57-69	2	
70-75	5	
76	5	14
77	10	23
78	10	
79	10	34
80	18 ▽	71

Turok, Son of Stone
DELL, 1956

3	155	574
4-5	125	
6-7	110	
7/15¢	135	
8-10	110	
11-20	75	
21-30	48	
31-40	38	
41-50	28	
51-60	22	
61-70	15	
71-90	10	
91-99	8	
100	8	50
101-110	8	
111-130	6	
GS 1	100	

Ult. Fantastic Four
MARVEL, 2004

1	5	14
2	4	9
3-7	3	
8	4	
9-13	2	
13/Sketch	6	
14-18	2	
19-20	5	
21	3	
21/Variant	8	
22-27	3	
Ann 1	4	

Ultimates
MARVEL, 2002

1	7	16
2	9	13
3	6	10
4	10	18
5	8	15
6	7	9
7	6	
8	5	9
9	6	12
10	4	
11	3	
12	2	4
13	4	

Swamp-Ultimate

Flashback 1986

20 years ago in CBG...

#650 MAY 2 1986

A fire in the **Rip Off Press** warehouse in San Francisco destroyed an estimated 175,000 underground comics, 20,000 paperback books, and 10,000 posters. The April 4 fire destroyed the publisher's entire warehouse stock, including its inventory of *Fabulous Furry Freak Brothers* and *Fat Freddy's Cat* by **Gilbert Shelton**.

#651 MAY 9 1986

Marvel unveiled its latest imprint: **New Universe**. The line was to be based on science and — perhaps more innovatively — take place in real time. It eventually spawned eight titles including ***D.P. 7***, ***Starbrand***, ***Psi-Force***, and ***Kickers Inc.*** In 2006, Marvel reintroduced the New Universe as a series of one-shots and an ongoing series by **Warren Ellis**, titled ***newuniversal***.

#652 MAY 16 1986

Lynn Johnston, creator of the daily strip ***For Better of For Worse***, became the first woman named "Outstanding Cartoonist of the Year" by the **National Cartoonists Society**. Johnston was also the first woman ever nominated for the honor, known as the **Reuben Award**.

#653 MAY 23 1986

Frank Miller emphasized that his new ***Elektra*** mini-series, illustrated by **Bill Sienkiewicz**, "is not a kid's comic." The series was published as part of Marvel's **Epic** line.

#654 MAY 30 1986

The backup becomes the feature: From **Kitchen Sink Comix**, news broke that **Donald Simpson**'s ***Megaton Man*** would end with #10 in June, while the backup story for that series, ***Border Worlds***, would get its own series in July.

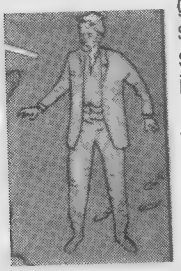
— By Ray Sidman
from the Comics Buyer's Guide archives

	267	268	269	270	271	272	273	274	275	276	277	278	279	280	281
	MAY 80	JUN 80	JUL 80	AUG 80	SEP 80	OCT 80	NOV 80	DEC 80	JAN 81	FEB 81	MAR 81	APR 81	MAY 81	JUN 81	JUL 81
NM Price	$5	$5	$4	$4	$4	$4	$4	$4	$4	$4	$4	$4	$4	$3	$5
		Animal Man appears		Back to Paradise Island; goes to 50¢ at #271		Fights Angle Man			Fights Cheetah		Fights Kobra		Etta Candy disappears		

PRICE GUIDE KEY: OTHER GRADES
Unslabbed (loose) Very Fine/Near Mint is **5/6** (83%) of the unslabbed NM price above
Fine (F) is **1/3** (33%) of NM
Very Good (VG) is **1/5** (20%) of NM
Very Fine (VF) is **2/3** (67%) of NM
Good (G) is **1/8** (12.5%) of NM

War of the Worlds

Since the original publication of H.G. Wells' *War of the Worlds* more than a century ago, it has captured the imagination of writers and artists from succeeding generations. Orson Welles scared a nation in 1939. George Pal visualized it for audiences in 1953. And, recently, the blockbuster film with Tom Cruise reimagined it for us. It is in comics, books, paperbacks, and hardcovers, each with its own strengths and weaknesses.



DARK HORSE
WRITERS:
H.G. WELLS, IAN EDGINGTON
ARTIST:
D'ISRAELI
COLOR • 72 PGS.
$14.95

Ian Edgington and D'Israeli have taken the high road and interpreted *War* as a late-1800s tale. Scientists still get front-page news and are seen with respect. There is no electricity in common use. Weapons? The mighty cannon, of course. And we can't forget bacteria, either.

Art-wise, it is a good job, complete with devastating scenes of destruction, raging Victorian citizens, and a pock-faced hero who lives to see the day of deliverance. All in all, it's a good adaptation of a novel that will always be a classic.

★★½ — **Tim Lasiuta**

www.darkhorse.com
ISBN: 1-59307-474-3

RetroView
SUPERMAN: KRYPTON

Reviewed by Brent Frankenhoff

Following the "DC Implosion" in the late 1970s, the company was reluctant to produce new titles for a time, preferring to stick to the tried-and-true series that had survived over the decades. By 1981, the trend was starting to reverse with the introduction of a few new titles, including *New Teen Titans* and *All-Star Squadron*. DC launched its first mini-series that year, as well, with *Krypton Chronicles*, a three-issue look at Superman's (and Supergirl's) genealogy. While not necessarily a huge hit, it did pave the way for myriad mini-series over the next quarter-century (and counting).

Krypton Chronicles ™ DC

COST TO OWN THE ORIGINALS IN NM: $6

Ultimates 2 — MARVEL, 2005

	UNSLABBED Near Mint	SLABBED CGC 9.4 NM
1	5	
1/2nd	3	
1/Sketch	35	
2-10	3	
Ann 1	4	

Ultimate Spider-Man — MARVEL, 2000

	UNSLABBED Near Mint	SLABBED CGC 9.4 NM
½	8 △	21
½/A	18	27
1	65 ▲	126
1/White	375 △	286
1/DF	175 △	131
1/Kay-Bee	4	
1/FCBD	3	12
1/Checkers	7	
1/Payless	6	73
1/Target	175	192
3	16 ▽	26
4	8 ▽	28
5	55 △	64
6	9 △	26
6/Niagara	35	
7	9 △	20
8	8 ▲	20
8/Payless	6	
9	6	12
10	6 △	16
11	5	15
12	4 ▽	14
13	5	17
14	4	13
15	5	15
16	3	11
17	3 ▽	14
18	3	13
19	3	16
20	3	13
21	3	13
22	4	15
23	3	
24	3	14
25	3	15
26	3	13
27	4	12
28	3	
29	4	16
30	3	13
31	4	12
32	3	10
33	4 ▽	16
34	3	13
35	3	13
36	3	9
37	3	15
38	3	9
39	3	11
40	3	13
41	3	
42	3	11
43	3	11
44	3	
45	3	11
46	3	
47	4	
48	3 ▽	23
49	3	8
50	4	12
51-59	3	
60	8	15
61	5	
62	8	
63	5	
➥Gwen Stacy returns		
64	4	
65	5	
66	2	
67	3	
68-71	2	
72	4	
73-77	2	
78-91	3	
Ann 1	4	
SP 1	4	11

Ult. X-Men — MARVEL, 2000

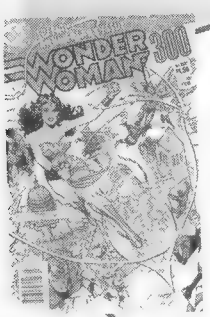
	UNSLABBED Near Mint	SLABBED CGC 9.4 NM
½	5	14
1	14 ▽	33
1/Sketch	20	
1/DF	40	105
1/Checkers	30 ▽	46
1/NYPost	8	
1/Universal	60	
2	7 ▽	16
3	6	13
4	5	11
5	5	13
6	4	
7	4	12
8	4	13
9	4	12
10	4	12
11	3	14
12	3	11
13	4	
14	3	
15	4	
16	3	8
17	3	8
18	5	
19	4	11
20	3	
21	3	7
22-26	3	
27-32	2	
33	5	
34	4	12
40	2	
41	5	
42	4	
43-49	2	
50	5	
50/Conv	15	18
51-59	2	
60-61	3	
61/Coipel	5	34
62-67	3	
Ann 1	4	

Uncanny X-Men — MARVEL, 1970

	UNSLABBED Near Mint	SLABBED CGC 9.4 NM
-1	2	
142	25 △	40
➥Future Past		
143	8 ▽	23
144	6	22
145	7 △	23
146	6 ▽	20
147	6 △	22
148	6 ▽	18
149	5 ▽	20
150	5 ▽	19
151	5	15
152	5 △	17
153	5	16
154	5	18
155	5	16
156	5	20
157	5 ▽	20
158	6	23
➥Rogue app.		
159	5	25
160	5	18
161	5	20
162	6	22
163	5	20
164	5	24
165	5 △	18
166	5	16
167	4	14
168	5	18
169	5	21
170	5	19
171	5	22
➥Rogue joins team		
172	5	19
173	5	18
174	5	18
175	5	21
176	4	12
177	4	16
178	5	12
179	4	12
180	3	
181	4	11
182	5	18
183	5	18
184	4	17
185	4	14
186	4	14
187	3	11
188	3	14
189	4	16
190	4	12
191	5	15
192	4	14
193	5	16
194	3	19
195	3	18
196	3 ▽	12
197	3	13
198	3	17
199	3	14
200	6 ▽	17
201	5	22
➥Portacio art		
202	4	17
203	4 △	15
204	4	
205	4	23
206	4	14
207	4	18
208	4	14
209	4	18
210	5	26
211	5 ▲	19
212	8 ▽	24
➥Wolv. vs. Sabretooth		
213	8 △	25
➥Wolv vs Sabretooth		
214-215	3	
216	4	8
217-218	3	
219	4	17
220	4	18
221	7	24
➥1st Mr Sinister		
222	5	25
➥Wolv. vs. Sabretooth		
223	4	18
224	3	
225	3	13
226	3	
227	3	10
228	3	14
229	3	13
230	3	15
231	3	
232	4	13
233	3	
234	3	17
235-240	3	
241	3	11
242	3	
243	3	10
244	5 ▽	21
➥1st Jubilee		
245	3 ▽	21
246	3	
247	3	12
248	5 △	21
➥1st Jim Lee X-Men		
249	3	
250	3	13
251	3	19
252	3	15
253-254	3	
255	3	18
256	3	16
257	3	14
258	3	14
259	4	16
260	3	
261	3	16
262	3	16
263	3	17
264-265	3	
266	14 ▽	45
➥1st Gambit		
267	6	21
➥Jim Lee; 2nd Gambit		
268	6 ▽	19
269	3	
270	4	17
271	3	13
272-273	3	
274	3	12
275	3	15
276	3	14
277-280	3	
281	2 △	11
282	3	16
283	5	14
284	4	
285	3	
286	2	
287	3	
288-291	2	
292	3	
293	2	
294/Collector's	3	9
295/Collector's	2	9
296/Collector's	3	12
297-299	2	
300	3	11
301-302	2	
303	3	10
304	2	12
305	2	8
306	2	
307	5	
308-328	2	
329	4	
330-352	2	
353	3	
354-362	2	
363	4	
364	3	
365-378	2	
379	3	
380-381	2	
381/DF	7	25
382-386	2	
387	3	
388-389	2	
390	2	24
391-393	2	
394	2	12
395-403	2	
404	4	
405-411	2	
412	2	9
413-415	2	
416	3	11
417-429	2	
430-438	3	
439	2	
440-441	3	
442	2	
443	3	
444	4	
445-449	2	
450	7	

Joker appears — Goes to 60¢ — New Teen Titans appear

	282	283	284	285	286	287	288	289	290	291
	AUG 81	SEP 81	OCT 81	NOV 81	DEC 81	JAN 82	FEB 82	MAR 82	APR 82	MAY 82
NM Price	$5	$5	$3	$3	$3	$3	$3	$3	$3	$3



△ #300

Wonder Woman

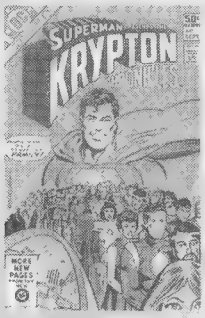
A new member of the family

Wonder Woman #300 celebrated several milestones. In addition to the series reaching its 300th issue after almost 40 years, it was revealed that Earth-2's Wonder Woman and Steve Trevor had married and produced a daughter, Lyta.

Image © 1983 DC

THE BOTTOM LINE

Krypton Chronicles #1 ★★★



DC
Sep 1981 • 25 pp.
Writer: E. Nelson Bridwell
Pencils: Curt Swan
Inks: Frank Chiaramonte
Cover: Rich Buckler, Dick Giordano

"The Search for Superman's Roots"

Clark Kent is assigned a series of stories on Superman's family tree and journeys to the newly enlarged city of Kandor to research his genealogy. As Superman learns the early history of the Els, a mysterious intruder tries to disrupt the tales.

In the wake of such TV mini-series as *Roots* and *Shogun* (both referred to by Morgan Edge at the issue's beginning), revealing more of Superman's family history and, along the way, Krypton's, seems like a good plan.

In practice, it can be difficult to show the El family as anything other than successful and it appears that no other Kryptonians made any useful contributions to Kryptonian society.

Near Mint copy: **9.8** — **Then 50¢ NOW $2**

	UNSLABBED Near Mint	SLABBED CGC 9.4 NM
451	6	6
➥X-23 app.		
452	3	
453-454	2	
455	4	
456-461	2	
461/Kubert	15	
➥House of M		
462-470	3	
Ann 1	50	206
Ann 2	45	119
Ann 3	14	35
Ann 4	6	23
Ann 5 ▲	5	19
Ann 6	7	13
Ann 7	5	16
Ann 8	4	17
Ann 9	10	15
Ann 10	8	19
Ann 11	4	20
Ann 12	4	16
Ann 13	3	
Ann 14	6	16
Ann 15	4	
Ann 16	2	
Ann 17-18	3	
Ann 1995	4	
Ann '96-'98	3	
Ann '00-'01	4	

Villains United
DC, 2005

1	12	
1/2nd	8	
1/3rd	3	
2	5	
3-5	3	
6	4	

Walking Dead
IMAGE, 2003

1	35	
2	32	
3	15	
4	12	
4/A	6	
5	4	
6-25	3	

Wanted
IMAGE, 2003

1 ▽	12	40
1/A	9	
1/B	8	
1/C	3	
1/D	6	29

	UNSLABBED Near Mint	SLABBED CGC 9.4 NM
1/E	5	
2	3	
2/B	4	
2/C	5	
3	3	
3/A	4	
4-5	3	
6	3	16

Warlock
MARVEL, 1972

1	32	121
2	15	52
3	15	55
4	8	49
5	8	29
6	7	50
7	7	
8	7	48
9	10	41
10	10	39
11	10	29
12	8	35
12/30¢	15	65
13	8	35
13/30¢	15	
14	8	22
14/30¢	15	
15	8 △	32

Warlord
DC, 1976

1 ▽	10	45
2	4	
3	3	11
4-6	3	
7-29	2	
30-47	1	
48	2	
49-130	1	
131	2	
132	1	
133	2	
Ann 1	3	
Ann 2-6	1	

Watchmen
DC, 1986

1	8	18
➥Moore, Gibbons series		
2	5	14
3	5	10
4-7	4	
8	4	8
9	4	6
10-11	4	
12	4	12

	UNSLABBED Near Mint	SLABBED CGC 9.4 NM
Web of Spider-Man		
MARVEL, 1985		
1	8 ▲	22
2	6	15
3	5	
4-5	4	
6	4	11
7	4	23
8	4	10
9-10	4	
11	3	13
12-28	3	
29	5	15
30	4	
31	5	
32	5	15
33-35	3	
36	4	
37	3	
38	5	
39-47	3	
48	8	15
➥1st Demogoblin		
49	2	
50	3	
51-57	2	
58	3	
59	8	
60-61	3	
62-89	2	
90	5	
91-99	2	
100	4	
101-105	2	
106/Collector's	5	
106	1	
107-113	2	
113/Collector's	4	
114-116	2	
117	3	
117/Variant	5	
118	3	
119	2	
119/Collector's	6	
120	4	
121-124	2	
125	3	
125/Variant	4	
126-129	2	
129/Collector's	5	
Ann 1	7	
Ann 2	6	10
Ann 3-10	3	
SS 1	4	

	UNSLABBED Near Mint	SLABBED CGC 9.4 NM
Weird War Tales		
DC, 1971		
1	125	500
2	75	175
3	45	
4-5	30	
6-10	20	
11	12	113
12	12	
13	12	34
14-20	12	
21-28	8	
29	8	20
30-31	8	
32-50	6	
51-76	5	
77	5	59
78-92	5	
93	6	29
94-101	5	
102-123	4	
124	4	17

Weird Western Tales
DC, 1972

12	45	163
13	30	115
14	20	88
15	20	79
16-19	12	
20	12	58
21-27	12	
28	12	52
29	16	50
30	8	
31	8	42
32-34	8	
35	8	42
36	8	41
37-42	8	
43-50	6	
51-70	5	

Werewolf By Night
MARVEL, 1972

1	80 ▲	267
2	30	105
3	15	54
4	18	77
5	15	59
6	15	57
7	15	
8	15	57
9	15	61
10 ▽	15	62
11	12	41
12	12	41
13	12	49
14	12	45
15 ▽	15	54
16	12	44
17	12	34
18	10	
19	10	57
20	10	32
21-22	8	
23	8	31
24	8	
25	8	36
26	8	30
27	8	22
28 ▽	8	30
29	8	37
30	8	31
31	8	31
32 ▽	60	325
➥1st Moon Knight		
33	30	143
34	8	72
35	5	
36	5	37
37	10	55

	UNSLABBED Near Mint	SLABBED CGC 9.4 NM
38	5	
38/30¢	15	
39	5	46
39/30¢	15	
40-41	5	
42	12	38
43	18	45

What If...?
MARVEL, 1977

1 ▽	15	40
2	10	34
3	8	20
4	8	22
5	8	15
6	5	13
7	5	10
8	5	24
9	5	11
10	5	16

	UNSLABBED Near Mint	SLABBED CGC 9.4 NM
11	4	22
12	4	14
13	5	
14-15	4	
16	3	
17	4	17
18-19	3	
20	3	10
21	3	11
22-23	3	
24	3	23
25-26	3	
27	5	21
28	8	18
29	3	
30	8	18
31	8	27
32-33	3	
34	3	20
35	5	14

	UNSLABBED Near Mint	SLABBED CGC 9.4 NM
36	3	20
37	3	
38	3	20
39-45	3	
46	4	
47	3	
Special 1	4	

What If...?
MARVEL, 1989

-1	2	
1	4	11
2-20	3	
21-23	2	
24	4	
25	3	
26-49	2	
50	3	
51-99	2	
100	2	9

Ultimate What If $

Other Flashbacks

On this date...

MAY 1940 — **Dr. Fate** first appeared this month in both ***More Fun Comics*** #55 and ***Justice League of America*** #21. Also this month, the red-haired version of **Lex Luthor** first appeared in ***Action Comics*** #23.

MAY 1942 — Antics-loving **Woody Woodpecker** got his debut in ***Funnies*** #64 in this month.

MAY 1943 — It had to happen eventually. ***Action Comics*** #60 featured the debut of **Lois Lane** as **Superwoman**. (Read more about that on page 90 of this issue of ***CGG***.)

MAY 1959 — Love him or hate him, **Batmite** first appeared in ***Detective Comics*** #267 on this date.

SPRING 1961 — **Don Thompson** and (future spouse) **Maggie Thompson** launched the comic-book fanzine ***Comic Art*** with #1, the first ongoing fanzine devoted to all aspects of comic art.

MAY 1961 — Several DC heroes appeared for the first time this month in ***Action Comics*** #276 as part of **The Legion of Super-Heroes: Brainiac 5**, **Phantom Girl**, **Shrinking Violet**, **Sun Boy**, **Triplicate Girl**, and even **Bouncing Boy**.

MAY 1963 — This month proved pivotal to **Spider-Man**'s history, with the debut of **The Vulture** in ***Amazing Spider-Man*** #2 and the introduction of **Dr. Octopus** in #3.

MAY 1990 — The **Danny Ketch** version of **Ghost Rider** hit comics with a vengeance in ***Ghost Rider*** (Vol. 2) #1, a series that proved immensely popular.

— By Ray Sidman
from the Comics Buyer's Guide archives

	Supergirl appears	Starfire appears				1st Aegeus			1st Lyta Trevor			Fights Polaris		1st Circe	Aegeus appears
	292 JUN 82	293 JUL 82	294 AUG 82	295 SEP 82	296 OCT 82	297 NOV 82	298 DEC 82	299 JAN 83	300 FEB 83	301 MAR 83	302 APR 83	303 MAY 83	304 JUN 83	305 JUL 83	306 AUG 83
NM Price	$3	$3	$3	$3	$3	$3	$3	$3	$6	$3	$3	$3	$3	$3	$3

PRICE GUIDE KEY: OTHER GRADES — **Unslabbed (loose) Very Fine/Near Mint** is **5/6** (83%) of the unslabbed NM price above; **Very Fine (VF)** is **2/3** (67%) of NM; **Fine (F)** is **1/3** (33%) of NM; **Very Good (VG)** is **1/5** (20%) of NM; **Good (G)** is **1/8** (12.5%) of NM

Write Now! #11

Edited by *Superman on the Couch* author Danny Fingeroth, *Write Now!* magazine is a quarterly publication aimed at aspiring writers of comics, animation, and science fiction. In this issue, 27 professionals wax philosophical on two diverse, yet hopelessly intertwined topics: creativity and business. Since artists aren't always the best of businessmen, the latter advice could prove especially beneficial.

TWOMORROWS
WRITERS:
VARIOUS
EDITOR:
DANNY FINGEROTH
B/W • 80 Pgs.
$5.95

Some of the creators, such as Bruce Jones and Kurt Busiek, fill an entire page or more with their wit and wisdom, while others, such as Peter David and R. Sikoryak, provide a mere sentence or two. Erik Larsen, Dennis O'Neil, Stan Lee, Neil Gaiman, and most of the others fall somewhere in between. The advice ranges from nuts-and-bolts practicality (hire a good accountant) to endearingly artistic (follow your bliss). Useful or not, it's fun to read what each writer has to say.

Rounding out the issue are interviews with Tom DeFalco, Ron Frenz, and Jim Salicrup, "Creating Characters" by John Ostrander, a feature on writing for film and comics by Robert Tinnell, and more.

★★★ — **Brett Weiss**

www.twomorrows.com

What If...?

CONTINUED

	UNSLABBED Near Mint	CGC 9.4 NM	SLABBED
101-104	2		
105	12		55
106-113	2		
114	3		

Whiz Comics

FAWCETT, 1940

1	70000		
➥1st Captain Marvel			
2	5200		
3	3400		
4	2800		
5	2250		
6	1650		
7	1725		
8-9	1650		
10	1250		
11-12	1100		
13-14	1075		
15	1250		
16-18	1100		
19-20	750		
21	800		
22-24	600		
25	6200		
➥1st Capt. Marvel Jr.			
26	550		
27-30	525		
31-32	460		
33	525		
34	365		
35	410		
36-40	365		
41-43	260		
44	300		
45-50	260		
51-60	210		
61	175		520
62-70	175		
71-82	150		
83-99	130		
100	130		836
101-120	110		
121-152	100		
153-155	200		

Witching Hour

DC, 1969

1	150		596
2	70		
3	50		193
4-6	25		
7	18		
8-10	15		
11	15		189
12	15		331
13	15		117
14	10	▽	231
15-20	10		
21	10		249
22-37	10		
38	10		229
39-40	10		
41	10		64
42-49	10		
50	10		48
51	10		65
52	8		47
53-54	8		
55	8		65
56-63	8		
64	8		40
65-66	8		
67-70	5		
71	5		22
72	5		31
73-76	5		
77	5		36
78-83	5		
84	5		16
85	5		

Wolverine

MARVEL, 1982

1	25	△	42
2	18	▽	27
3	17	▽	24
4	16	△	27

Wolverine

MARVEL, 1988

-1	2		
½	3		18
½/Ltd.	8		
1	10	▽	31
2	6	▽	16
3	5		18
4	5		15
5	5	△	14
6	4		12
7	5		12
8	5		15
9	5		14
10	8	△	31
11-14	4		
15	5		
16-19	4		
20	5		
21-23	4		
24-40	3		
41	4		9
42	2		
43	3		
44	2		
45-47	3		
48	3		15
49	3		
50	4		17
51-56	2		
57	3		
58-74	2		
75	4		13
76-79	2		
80	8		
81-84	2		
85	3		
85/Variant	4		
86-87	2		
87/Deluxe	4		
88	2		
88/Deluxe	4		
89	2		
89/Deluxe	4		
90	2		
90/Deluxe	4		
91-98	2		
99	4		
100	5		22
100/Variant	8		
101-124	2		
125	4		
125/Variants	10		
126-130	2		
131	5		10
131/A	3	△	25
132-133	2		
133/Variant	4		
134-144	2		
145	4		14
145/Gold foil	25		35
145/DF	50		14
145/Silver foil	30		14
145/Nabisco	400		107
146	5		24
147-149	2		
150	3		
150/DF	14		19
151-165	2		
166	3		10
167-189	2		
Ann 1995	4		
Ann '96-'97	3		
Ann '99-'00	4		
Ann 2001	3		
Special 1	4		

Wolverine

MARVEL, 2003

1	7		15
2	5		
3	4		
4	3		12
5-9	3		
10	2		
11-15	3		
16	2		
17	3		
18-20	2		
20/Variant	90	▽	75
➥Retailer incentive			
20/Texas	20		29
➥Texas con premium			
21-26	2		
26/Silvestri	15		
26/DF	20		
27	2		
27/Quesada	25		
28-29	2		
30-39	3		

Wolverine: The Origin

MARVEL, 2001

1	25	△	33
1/DF	50		54
2	12	▽	15
2/DF	24		
3	8		17
3/DF	20		
4	5	▽	12
4/DF	20		
5	4		13
5/DF	20		
6	5		15
6/DF	20		

Wonder Woman

DC, 1987

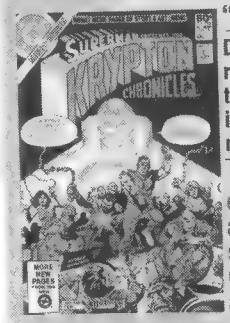
0	6		
1	4		
2-10/A	3		
11-17	2		
18	2		6
19-84	2		
85	10		
➥1st Deodato art			
86	4		
87-93	3		
94-99	2		
100	3		
100/Variant	4		
101-119	2		
120	3		
121-199	2		
200	4		
201-213	2		
214	25		
➥Inf. Crisis tie			
215	10		
216	7		
217	6		
218	5		
219	15		
➥Max Lord dies			
219/2nd	3		
220	12		
221-226	3		
1000000	3		
Ann 1-2	2		
Ann 3	3		
Ann 4	4		
Ann 5	3		
Ann 6	4		
Ann 7-8	3		
Special 1	2		

X-Men

MARVEL, 1963

1	7000		
➥1st X-Men			
2	1900		6400
3	1030		4251
4	900		3768
5	550		2192
6	500		2021
7	475		1967
8	360		1449
9	360		1301
10	360		
11	300		
12	500		2008
➥1st Juggernaut			
13	275		1302
14	250		1041
15	190		901
16	190		537
17	100	▽	936
18	100		
19	100		520
20	100	△	420
21	90		339
22	90		408
23	90		368
24	90	▽	342
25	90		332
26	90		348
27	90		339
28	155		710
➥1st Banshee			
29	90		330
30	90	▽	315
31	90		372
32	90	▽	280
33	90		452
34	90		423
35	150		1030
➥Spider-Man app.			
36	65	▽	261
37	65	△	246
38	80		285
39	90		437
40	90		249
41	65		314
42	65		258
43	65	△	306
44	65		292
45	65	▽	199
46	65		380
47	65		222
48	65		255
49	75		338
50	75		305
51	75		241
52	65		267
53	72		301
54	72		265
55	72		234
56	72	▽	272
57	72		306
58	100		451
➥1st Havok			
59	70		
60	70		276
61	70	△	288
62	70		324
63	70		309
64	70	▽	290
65	70		262
66	80		334
➥Last new issue			
67	35		153
68	35		
69	35		135
70	35		144
71	35		144
72	35		144

RETROVIEW
Krypton Chronicles #2 ★★★



DC
Oct 1981 • 25 pp.
Writer: E. Nelson Bridwell
Pencils: Curt Swan
Inks: Frank Chiaramonte
Cover: Ross Andru, Dick Giordano

"Bring Back Yesterday!"

Delving further into Krypton's past reveals more accomplishments by the House of El until Kandor's planet is ready to return to its alternate dimension.

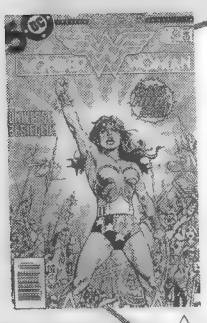
In addition to having Kryptonian equivalents of such historical Terrans as Thomas Jefferson, the El family also had its own Galileo and Columbus. Geez, were there *any* of Superman's ancestors who weren't outstanding? E. Nelson Bridwell does skip some centuries this issue, so perhaps that's when the lesser Els existed.

As a bonus for raising the price 10¢ on this issue, there's a map of Krypton by Albert De Guzman in the centerspread.

30 ©

Actual CGC COPY: **9.8** — **Then 60¢ NOW $2**

Wonder Woman



End of the line

The events of *Crisis on Infinite Earths* wiped the original Wonder Woman (who lived on Earth-2) out of existence, but the gods took pity and brought her to Olympus. The Silver Age version was devolved back into clay by the Anti-Monitor in *Crisis* #12.

△ #3

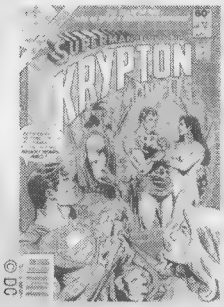
Image © 1986 DC

THE BOTTOM LINE

Black Canary appears — 1st Earthworm — Goes to 75¢ — Circe appears

	307	308	309	310	311	312	313	314	315
	SEP 83	OCT 83	NOV 83	DEC 83	JAN 84	FEB 84	MAR 84	APR 84	MAY 84
NM Price	$3	$3	$3	$3	$3	$3	$3	$3	$3

Krypton Chronicles #3 ★★★



DC
Nov 1981 • 25 pp.
Writer: E. Nelson Bridwell
Pencils: Curt Swan
Inks: Frank Chiaramonte
Cover: Ross Andru, Dick Giordano

"The Race to Overtake the Past!"

Superman and Supergirl use a light-gathering device to view images from Krypton's distant past and trace their family tree to the first El.

While Curt Swan was a logical choice for this mini-series, it's doubtful that the El family would have maintained such similar facial features throughout the centuries. At several points, the characters look suspiciously like Superman with gray or facial hair. E. Nelson Bridwell addresses this by showing that the first ancestor to add El to his name, Erok, looked exactly like his descendant.

Overall, this was a fun look at the El family tree, but ultimately it contributed little to the Superman mythos.

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	UNSLABBED Near Mint	SLABBED CGC 9.4 NM
73	35	313
74	35	126
75-76	35	
77	35	127
78	35	149
79	35	
80	35	126
81	40	147
82 △	40	150
83	40	194
84	40	207
85	40	163
86	35	100
87	35	143
88 △	35	133
89	35	118
90	35	167
91	35	199
92 △	35	152
93	35	118
94 ▽	500	1697
➥2nd New X-Men		
95 ▽	85	293
➥Thunderbird dies		
96 ▽	55	209
97 ▽	48	177
98 △	48	204
98/30¢	125	
99 ▽	48	180
99/30¢	125	
100 △	60	251
➥Phoenix orig. starts		
100/30¢	135	1538
101 △	55	380
➥Phoenix org n		
102 ▽	28	126
103 ▽	28	125
104 △	28	108
105 △	28	96
105/35¢	60	
106 △	28	93
106/35¢	60	
107 ▲	28	121
107/35¢	60	
108 ▽	35	125
➥1st Byrne X-Men		
109 △	30	109
➥1st Weapon alpha		
110 △	20	79
111 ▽	20	68
112 ▽	20	70
113 ▽	20	70
114 ▲	20	92
115 △	20	82
116 ▽	16	65
117 ▽	16	54
118 △	16	50
119 ▽	16	44
120 ▽	28	115
➥1st Alpha Flight		
121 ▽	28	73
122 ▽	12	55
123 ▽	12	45
124 ▽	12	43
125 ▽	12	50
126 ▽	12	41
127 △	12	44
128 ▽	12	46
129 ▽	20	69
➥1st Kitty, E. Frost		
130 △	12	50
131 ▽	12	52
132 ▽	12	41
133 △	12	52
134 ▽	12	45
135 ▽	12	42
136 △	11	40
137 △	14	49
➥Phoenix dies		
138 △	8	35
139 ▽	11	39
140 △	11	34
141 ▽	11	45
➥Future Past		

X-Men
MARVEL, 1991

-1	3	
-1/A	4	
1/Beast	5	15
1/Colossus	3	
1/Cyclops	4	
1/Magneto	3	
1/Collector's	5	
2	4	
3-20	3	
21-24	2	
25	5	16
25/Gold	25	20
25/Ltd	30	43
26-29	2	
30	3	
31-49	2	
50	3	
50/Variant	4	27
51-54	2	
54/Silver	25	
55-61	2	
62	2	9
62/A	3	13
63-79	2	
80	3	
80/Holofoil	10	13
80/DF	7	
81-98	2	
99-100/G	3	
101-104	2	
105	3	
106-113	2	
114	5	22
115	2	
116	2	16
117-144	2	
145-147	3	
148	2	
149	3	
150	4	
151	3	7
152	2	
153-157	3	
158	2	
159	3	
160-164	2	
165	3	
166-169	2	
170-Ann 3	3	
Ann 1995	4	
Ann 1996-'983		
Ann 1999	4	
Ann 2001	4	9
Ashcan 1	1	

Young Allies Comics
TIMELY, 1941

1	11500	
2	3000	
3	2100	
4	3000	
5	1300	
6-8	875	
9	900	
10	875	
11-14	720	
15-16	615	
17	615	2339
18-20	615	

Young All-Stars
DC, 1987

1-3	3	
4-31	2	
Ann 1	3	

Young Avengers
MARVEL, 2005

1	10	
1/DirCut	6	
1/Conv	15	
2	7	
3	4	
4-10	3	

Young Justice
DC, 1998

1	4	
2-49	3	
50	4	
51-55	3	
1000000	4	
GS 1	5	

Young Love
DC, 1963

39	30	
40-50	24	
51-70	20	
71-90	14	
91	10	52
92-100	10	
101-106	7	
107	25	105
108	20	143
109-114	20	
115-126	12	

Young Men
MARVEL, 1950

4	120	
5-10	70	
11-23	52	
24	1600	
➥Cap, Namor origin		
25	775	
26-28	750	

Young Romance
DC, 1963

125	42	
126-140	18	
141-150	15	
151-159	12	
160-170	10	
171-177	9	
178	9	96
179-197	9	
198	20	
199	20	107
200-201	20	
202-208	8	

Y: The Last Man
DC, 2002

1	30	33
2	15	24
3	5	21
4	4	7
5	4	
6-43	3	

Zero Hour: Crisis in Time
DC, 1994

4-2	2	
1	3	
0	2	
Ashcan 1	1	

Zip Comics
M.L.J., 1940

1	3500	
2	1600	
3	1250	
4	900	
5	900	2133
6 △	750	1882
7-8	750	
9	800	
10	750	
11-17	600	
18	625	
19	600	
20	900	
21-26	540	
27	800	
28-30	540	
31-40	375	
41-47	280	

Zoo Funnies
CHILDREN COMICS, 1945

1	120	
2	70	120
3	70	
4-6	60	
7-9	52	
10-15	38	

Zorro
DELL, 1959

8-9	70	
10-12	68	
13-15	65	

Zorro
GOLD KEY, 1966

1	70	148
2-3	38	
4	38	88
5-6	34	
7	34	80
8-9	28	

Zorro
MARVEL, 1990

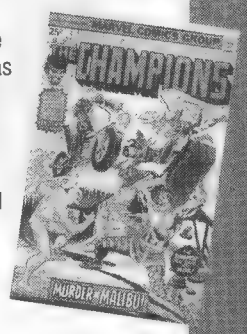
1	3	
2-12	2	

Zorro
NBM, 2005

1-4	3	

Tony's Back Page

We are the Champions?, Part 2



When last we met in this cozy little sidebar, we were speaking of *The Champions*, a series I conceived and wrote for Marvel in the 1970s. My original pitch for the title was as a super-heroic "buddy" series starring Iceman and The Angel, traveling across this great land of ours, having adventures, and making each other crazy *à la* Oscar Madison and Felix Unger. Then the editors got involved.

I was told a super-hero team must have five members. I was told this by the editor and writer of *Fantastic Four*.

I was told a super-hero team must have at least one woman member. Having set up The Black Widow's departure from *Daredevil* during my short run on that title, I chose her.

I was told a super-hero team must have at least one member with his own series. The editor suggested Luke Cage. I chose Johnny Blaze, figuring that, since I was writing *Ghost Rider*, I could keep Johnny too busy to attend Champions meetings.

I was told a super-hero team must have a "strong guy" on the team. I chose Hercules. If I had to play by these silly rules, I might as well go my editors one better. That's why I added Venus and a passel of Greek and Roman gods to the team's origin story. By then, I was even kind of sort of looking forward to the challenge of making this nonsense work.

My plan was to establish The Champions as super-heroes for the guys and gals on the street, agents of a charitable organization funded by The Angel's money. It wasn't a bad notion but it was too big a notion for me to manage with these mismatched characters and with the grandiose opening story arc I had come up with to get them all together as a team. I never did get a handle on it.

However, I did come up with a Russian tragedy involving The Black Widow. I'll tell you about it next month.

To be continued ...

— Tony Isabella

Editor's note: For more on ***The Champions,*** *see the "Obligatory Fight Scene" on Page 82.*

Dr. Cyber appears — Fights Dr. Cyber — Eros appears — Monitor appears — Atomic Knight appears — *Crisis* tie-ins

	316	317	318	319	320	321	322	323	324	325	326	327	328	329
	JUN 84	JUL 84	AUG 84	SEP 84	OCT 84	NOV 84	DEC 84	FEB 85	APR 85	MAY 85	JUL 85	SEP 85	DEC 85	FEB 86
NM Price	$3	$3	$3	$3	$3	$3	$3	$3	$3	$3	$3	$3	$3	$3

ENTERTAINMENT CARDS MARKET REPORT

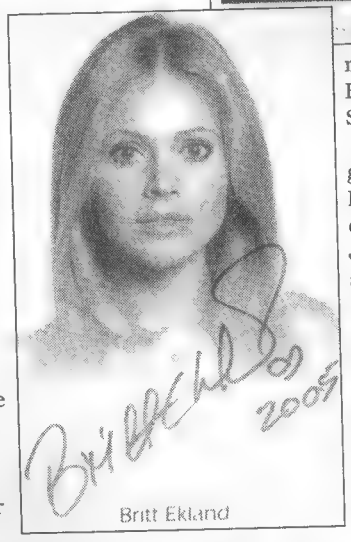
By RAY SIDMAN

Bring back memories with Scifihobby.com

This season, Scifihobby.com has given collectors two card series to choose from: *Classic Battlestar Galactica Colonial Warriors* and *007: Dangerous Liasons*. As is the case with all Scifihobby products, from the cool box art to the imaginative card subseries, they are fun to collect, educational to read, and bring back pop-culture memories.

The *Battlestar Galactica* set contains 72 cards with a 54-card expansion set based on the original 1978-79 TV series, nine Casting Call cards, nine ArtiFEX Chris Schalf cards, two tribute cards, 15 costume cards (four autographed), and 12 autographed cards.

In terms of content, images from both series — the first and the less well-received *Galactica 1980* — are included. The cards include four pictures of the characters, and back text includes quotes and explains their roles in the episodes. Even in this set, Starbuck is still cool!



Among the autographed cards are a Lieutenant Boomer costume card and James Patrick Stuart as Dr. Zee autograph card. More rare is the series' creator Glen A. Larson card. With the new series doing so well, this is a welcome addition for the *Battlestar Galactica* collector.

The world of James Bond from *Dr. No* to *Die Another Day* is celebrated in *Dangerous Liasons*. Ursula Andress is only one of the many women of Bond who joins other memorable actors autographing collectible cards for this set. Other signers include Maud Adams, Britt Ekland, Tanya Roberts, Don Stroud, Earl Cameron, and Robert Davi.

The full set includes 110 cards, 18 Bond Allies, 20 Bond Villains, 15 Bond girls, 20 art cards, and 23 autographed cards. The bonus card with the collector's binder is George Baker as Sir Hilary Bray from *On Her Majesty's Secret Service*. Each of the 20 Bond films are represented by at least two cards (*License to Kill*) to as many as eight (for *Dr. No*), and the card notes give a quick summary of the film's plot.

More information on sets is available via *www.scifihobby.com* and hobby shops.

— *Tim Lasiuta*

Batman, The Season One
Topps 2005

Set (90)	15.00
Magnet set (9)	31.00
Lenticular set (5)	25.00
Sketch Card	25.00

Buffy the Vampire Slayer: Men of Sunnydale
Inkworks 2005

Set (90)	16.00
Dressed To Kill Set (9)	40.00
Women Men Adore (6)	40.00
Boys Night Out Set (3)	20.00
Case Topper card	55.00
Nicholas Brendon Suit Jacket	35.00
Brendon Suit Trousers P'works	35.00
Anthony Stewart Head Shirt	35.00
Thomas Lenk T-Shirt P'works	30.00
D.B. Woodside Shirt P'works	20.00
Nicholas Brendon Autograph	65.00
Marc Blucas Autograph	35.00
Mark Metcalf Autograph	35.00
Tom Lenk Autograph	65.00
Adam Busch Autograph	65.00
Other Autographs	25.00
The Evil Trio (Danny Strong, Tom Lenk, and Adam Busch)	250.00

Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire
Artbox 2005

Set (90)	14.00
Rare Foil Set (9)	25.00
Cinema Film Cel Card	40.00
Box Topper Set (4)	20.00
Case Topper Card	55.00
Daniel Radcliffe First Task Cost.	30.00
Stanislav Ianevski Costume	20.00
Durmstrang Students Cost.	20.00
Emma Watson Pants Cost.	45.00
Matthew Lewis Pajamas Cost.	15.00
David Tennant Costume Card	15.00
Miranda Richardson Costume	45.00
Death Eaters Robe Costume	75.00
Pedja Bjelac Costume Card	15.00
Yule Ball Drapes Prop Card	65.00
Quidditch World Cup Prop	45.00
Tent Material Prop	75.00
Dragon Sei Sack Prop	250.00
Arena Canopy Prop Card	45.00
Gryffindor Banner Prop Card	75.00
Warwick Davis Autograph	30.00
Angelica Mandy Autograph	45.00
Shirley Henderson Autograph	35.00
Henry Lloyd-Hughes Auto	75.00
Jeff Rawle Autograph Card	40.00
Pedja Bjelac Autograph Card	35.00
Tiana Benjamin Auto Card	45.00
Stanislav Ianevski Auto Card	45.00
Miranda Richardson Auto	75.00
James & Oliver Phelps Auto	125.00
Robert Pattinson Auto Card	125.00
Rupert Grint Autograph Card	350.00

Lord of the Rings: Evolution
Topps 2006

Set (72)	15.00
Stained Glass Set (10)	20.00
Evolution A Set (20)	30.00
Evolution B Set (20)	50.00

Lord of the Rings Trilogy Chrome Edition
Topps 2004

Set (100)	18.00
Mir. Otto Edoras Stables skirt	50.00
House of Healing shirt	45.00
Elijah Wood Elven tunic	45.00
L. Makoare Witch-King robe	35.00
H. Weaving Rivendale cloak	30.00
Liv Tyler Autograph	75.00
V. Mortensen "Aragorn" Auto	75.00
V. Mortensen "King Elessar" Auto	75.00
David Wenham Autograph	75.00
Billy Boyd Autograph	40.00
Ian Holm Autograph	40.00
Karl Urban Autograph	35.00
Bernard Hill Autograph	35.00
Sala Baker Autograph	35.00
John Noble Autograph	30.00
Other Autographs	25.00

Lost In Space, The Complete
Rittenhouse Archives 2005

Set (90)	15.00
Original 1966 Lost In Space Series 1 Reprint Set (55)	80.00
Original 1966 Lost In Space Series II Set (55)	80.00
Good, Bad, Ugly Set (9)	15.00
Faces of Dr. Smith (9)	45.00
Character Set (7)	50.00
Sketch Card	70.00
Mark Goddard Signed Card	75.00
Angela Cartwright Signed	75.00
Marta Kristen Signed Card	75.00
Bill Mumy Signed Card	75.00
June Lockhart Signed Card	75.00
Bob May-Dick Tufeld Signed	90.00
Goddard-Kristen Signed	125.00
Mumy-Cartwright Signed	125.00
Lockhart, Kristen, Cartwright Trio Signed Card	200.00
Other autograph cards	20.00

Serenity
Inkworks 2005

Set (72)	13.00
Renegades Set (9)	40.00
Women of Serenity (5)	35.00
Truth Within Boxtoppers Set (3)	20.00
Browncoats Unite Case Top	40.00
Jewel Staite Pieceworks	35.00
Morena Baccarin Pieceworks	30.00
Other Pieceworks cards	20.00
Nathan Fillion Autograph	50.00
Gina Torres Autograph	30.00
Adam Baldwin Autograph	30.00
Alan Tudyk Autograph	35.00
Jewel Staite Autograph	60.00
Morena Baccarin Autograph	60.00
Sean Maher Autograph	40.00
Ron Glass Autograph	25.00
Chiwetel Ejiofor Autograph	20.00

Stargate SG-1 Season 8
Rittenhouse Archives 2006

Set (72)	12.00
Twisted Set (9)	20.00
Personnel Files (9)	45.00
Kneel Before Your Gods Card	75.00
Kelownan Files, Papers Relic	45.00
Map from Prophecy Relic	40.00
Alien Newspaper Relic	40.00
Mission Report Relic	40.00
Operations Manual Relic	40.00
Corin Nemic Costume	20.00
Michael Shanks Costume	35.00
Richard Dean Anderson Cost.	30.00
Christopher Judge Costume	25.00
Jay Acovone Costume	20.00
Dom DeLuise Costume	20.00
Erick Avari Costume	20.00
Peter Williams Cost (Case Top)	50.00
Cary-Hiroyuki Tagawa Auto	50.00
Peter Williams Autograph	50.00
Isaac Hayes Autograph	150.00
Dan Castellaneta Autograph	150.00
Judge/Amendola Dual Auto	150.00
Other autographs	15.00

Wacky Packages Series 2
Topps 2005

Set (55)	14.00
Clear Cling Set (9)	17.00
Tattoos Set (10)	24.00

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When the passion fades

Find what inspires

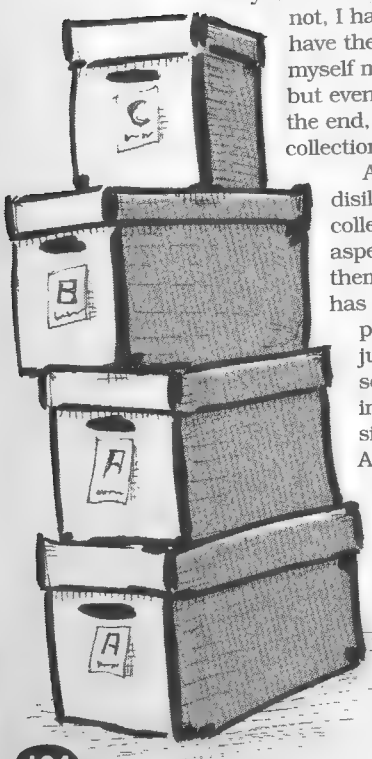
by CHUCK ROZANSKI

At the age of 52, he is considering paring down his collection a great deal, focusing instead on the few areas that still inspire him.

I recently received a letter from a very dear friend who has been collecting comics for more than 30 years. The central theme of his letter was a sense of unease and disillusionment with the massive size of his collection (51,000 back issues, plus many thousands of toys, statues, posters, *etc.*) and a thought that, while he still enjoyed quite a few aspects of comics collecting, his passion for collecting was, perhaps, beginning to ebb. At the age of 52, he is considering paring down his collection a great deal, focusing instead on the few areas that still inspire him. The following is the letter that I wrote to him, which he has graciously allowed me to share with all of you. It was not originally written as a column, but, when I completed this letter, I realized that I had covered quite a few of the same points about collecting comics that I was going to try to summarize for all of you this month.

Dear Gary,

Thank you very much for taking the time to write to me about your concerns. I spent 20 hours this past weekend sorting and hauling portions of my own personal comics and books collections, so I know exactly what you're talking about when you say that you get frustrated at not being able to access the various parts of your collection much of the time. Believe it or not, I have the exact same problem. I do have the advantage of having recently built myself my little collecting room at my farm, but even that space has its limitations. In the end, well over half of my personal comics collection will end up in storage.



As regards the crux of your feelings of disillusionment with the mass of your collection, which I perceive to be in some aspects a mid-life malaise, don't sweat them! I have to believe that everyone who has ever collected anything comes to a point where they begin to question just why in the world they have spent so much time and money accumulating cubic yards of material possessions. The common propensity of Americans to burden themselves with large quantities of physical assets has led to an entire industry of storage and maintenance. In great measure, that's why people's houses are getting so darn big. We need more room just to store all of the stuff that we've managed to stash away. As I'm sure you're already aware, 50,000 comics are at least 150 longboxes, which, when added to all the toys and ephemera, make one heck of a big pile. Only someone truly insane would not at some point feel conflicted about the burden of having to deal with that much mass.

All of the above having been said, there are a couple of key points I think that you should never forget.

First, the comics you've managed to accumulate constitute your winnings in the great poker game of life. Think about it. How many idiots have you known who lived solely from paycheck to paycheck, never accumulating anything? Not only do your boxes contain a huge number of memories, but they also reflect your stubborn dedication to slowly accumulate valuable assets over a long period of time. Your collection constitutes a savings account that has grown in value on a compound basis far more than the NASDAQ or the NYSE. I fully realize that the current deflation in some back-issue comics prices may make it appear that you were on a fool's errand all along but I really do not believe that to be the case. If I did, I certainly wouldn't be beating my own brains out trying to accumulate tens of thousands more back-issue comics each and every day.

The second key point that I want you to consider seriously is the fact that all collectibles go through periods of overabundance. As the first wave of collectors liquidate their collections (often around the age of 50), there are frequently (for short periods of time) far too many items available of a given genre. This can lead to the near-complete collapse of a collectibles market (as happened in the case of Jim Beam bottles and Avon collectibles) — or it can provide a window of opportunity for a new generation of younger collectors to purchase for a pittance items 20 to 30 years old. That's what I see happening in comics right now. The old and those of weak wills are getting out, while the young and the hungry are jumping in and snapping up comics bargains at ridiculously low prices.

The genuinely wise don't sell at the low point of a market, since they are well aware that all collectibles markets go through boom and bust cycles. Coins, for example, were pretty much dead in the water for several years not that long ago — but just recently became incredibly popular again, as the price of gold started to rise. Stamps and fine art also have gone through ebbs and flows of popularity. The wise purchase aggressively when prices are low — and purchase judiciously during those periods when prices are higher. In the end, however, the most canny collectors continue to build their collections steadily over a very long period of time.

Given the above, I would strongly urge you

to not succumb to the lure of momentary temptation to unburden yourself. I've seen thousands of people do exactly that over the past couple of decades and I know of only a handful who haven't regretted their decisions. If you were ever to try to rebuild your collection after selling it, you would discover just how great an asset you once controlled.

Never forget that time is now on your side! Every day that passes, every single item in your collection increases in both age and scarcity. Today's temporary overabundance of back-issue comics is in great measure a direct result of eBay's making it far easier for collections to be put into a worldwide market. I firmly believe, however, that today's low prices are encouraging a great many new collectors to start in the hobby. I see it daily in the tens of thousands of visitors who come to our Mile High Comics website.

Those new entrants, over a period of time, should gradually absorb today's overabundance. Once that occurs, I see prices for back-issues comics rising precipitously. That's why I'm investing every cent that I have right now in trying to accumulate as large an inventory of back-issue comics as I possibly can. Comics that are available for pennies today may well be difficult to obtain for dollars in 10 years.

My final point would be to remind you that your collection has been a part of your lifetime dreams. Not only have you been greatly entertained by your comics over time, but they also provided you with a goal. You told me when we were having our conversation that you want to build the ultimate comics reference library. I think that's a wonderful ambition!

Whether you actually ever achieve that goal is irrelevant, as long as you continue to believe that the sum of your efforts will ultimately lead you to a place of personal gratification. I don't know who first said it, but I passionately believe in the thought "You never become truly old, until you let your dreams die." What you have accomplished to this point with accumulating your collections is admirable, but, given that you may yet live for another 30 years, all you have accomplished to this point is actually nothing more than a really good start. Think about it. You have thousands of comics in your collection right now that were darned difficult to find in today's collecting environment.

How rare will they be in 2036?

My final point would be to remind you that your collection has been a part of your lifetime dreams.

CHUCK ROZANSKI, owner of Mile High Comics, the world's largest online retail store, has been with *CBG* since the beginning, his first ad appearing in #8 in 1971. Be sure to write him at *chuck@milehighcomics.com*, and check out his website at *www.milehighcomics.com*!

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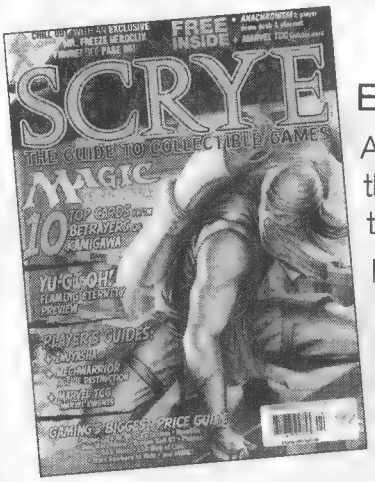

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Pittsburgh Comicon eyes 10,000 barrier

by RAY SIDMAN

Now in its 13th year, the Pittsburgh Comicon may achieve a notable level of greatness, as organizers hope to see 10,000 at this year's show. To help make that possible, owners and organizers Michael and Renee George have put together a convention for a wide range of fans.

Leading the way is the return of popular writer Brian Michael Bendis, who hasn't attended the show in a few years. "He always used to do our show," said Michael George in a conversation with ***CBG***. "and he actually got hired at our show before he was as large as he is now. We're really happy for him to be coming back."

George added that he feels fortunate to get artists like George Pérez and Michael Turner year after year. "We're so lucky to get them every year and for their support — they're always giving an awful lot to our Make-A-Wish auction."

The show's Make-a-Wish auction is one of the event's many highlights and benefits the Make-A-Wish Foundation. George emphasized that the push he and the other organizers give to it, adding that the Pittsburgh Comicon auction may be the largest of its kind in the country.

Other attractions designed to draw large crowds include numerous comic-book celebrities. Of the more than 100 creators scheduled to be on-hand, first-time attendees include such creators as Howard Chaykin, Tim Truman, Bob McLeob, Arthur Suydam, and Ande Parks.

George commented that the con has a history of strong support for independent publishers. He said that among the 190 booths — all sold out well before the show — are more than 100 independent and small-press publishers.

Adding to this is a workshop about how to self-publish: "Want to Publish Comics? With Josh Blaylock." Blaylock is founder and president of Devil's Due Publishing, which works with such properties as G.I. Joe, Chaos Comics, *Family Guy*, and several other titles. The workshop takes place Saturday from 2 to 4 p.m. Registration costs $50. "it's going to be a big, big exclusive event for our show," said George. "We really push independent publishing."

Fans can also attend several panels. These include "The Stars of *Star Wars*," "Robert E. Howard: The New Generation," "The House of Bendis," and "Pizza Party with Billy Tucci."

Saturday from 2 to 3 p.m. is the CBLDF Quick Sketch, with proceeds going to the Comic Book Legal Defense Fund.

Other *Star Wars*-related events include a showing of all six films and a fanfest *Star Wars* dinner Saturday evening.

There will also be a movie marathon, an anime marathon, and casino action, including a Texas Hold 'Em tournament with creator Michael Turner, con organizer Michael George, and others.

George also called the convention's website (*www.pittsburghcomiccon.com*) "one of the best" among the comics-convention industry.

For those looking at last-minute planning: the host hotel, the Radisson Hotel Pittsburgh, sold out weeks ago, and George said he expects other area hotels to sell out well before the show.

WHAT, WHERE, and WHEN

What: Pittsburgh Comic Con 2006

Where: Pittsburgh Expomart, 105 Mall Blvd., Monroeville, PA 15146

When: April 21-23

Hours: 10 a.m. to 7 p.m. Friday
10 a.m. to 6 p.m. Saturday
10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Sunday

Admission: Single-day: $17; Three-day: $45; ages 7 and under free with paid adult

For more information: (814) 467-4116; fax (814) 467-4416; Pittsburgh Comicon, 1002 Graham Ave., Windber, PA 15963; *pcomicon@floodcity.net*; *www.pittsburghcomicon.com*

George Pérez is a perennial favorite at the Pittsburgh Comicon.

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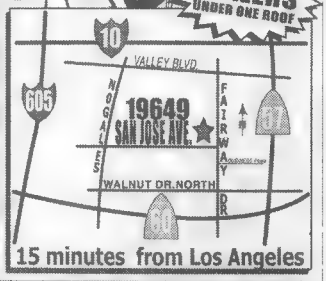

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CONVENTION PREVIEWS

by RAY SIDMAN

Creators line up in Detroit May 19-21

MOTOR CITY COMIC CON

More than 300 comic-book creators, media guests, and authors — that's the number Motor City Comic Con Convention Coordinator Gary Bishop told **CBG** he expected at this year's show.

He also hopes to stay on pace with the more than 14,000 visitors who attended the show last year.

To help with this, the event will take place in a new location: the new convention facility The Rock Financial Showplace in Novi, Mich., one mile away from last year's location.

Professional guests include comic book creators Sergio Aragonés, Art Baltazar, Aaron Bordner, Guy Davis, Mike Deodato, Dave Dorman, Greg Horn, Joseph Linsner, William Messner-Loebs, George Pérez, Mark Sparacio, David Spurlock, Jim Steranko, Billy Tucci, and Mark Waid.

Leading the media celebrity list is the cast of television show *Batman* — Adam West, Burt Ward, Yvonne Craig, Julie Newmar, Lee Meriweather, and Malachi Throne — as part of a 40th anniversary celebration of the show, which first aired in 1966. Joining the cast members will be memorabilia from the show, including the Batmobile, Batcycle, Batcomputer, and Batcowl.

Other media guests range from classic '50s TV and movies through current shows: Karen Allen, Dave Barclay, Dave Faustino, C. Martin Croker, Lisa Loring, John Saxon, Brent Spiner, Charlene Tilton, Marcia Wallace, and Matthew Wood.

Organizers have also put together the MCCC 18th Annual Art Contest sponsored by Blue Line Pro. The contest will offer competition in both black-and-white and color categories for three age groups: 12 and under, 13 to 17, and 18 and older. Winners will receive a certificate of excellence, free comics, and an art starter kit with Blue Line art pages and drawing supplies.

The Anime Club of Michigan is again at Motor City Comic Con to hold an animation festival featuring Japanese shows. In addition to regular programs, the anime room will show previews of upcoming movies, all from the start of the convention until it closes on Sunday.

Panels include "Legends of Comics," *Star Trek* panels, a *Star Wars* panel, as well as various panels on classic television.

Creative minds can take part in this year's Costume Contest with host Scott Crawford. It will take place on Saturday. Costumes will be judged in the 12 and under and 13 and older age groups, broken down into three categories: comic-book characters, science-fiction/fantasy, and manga. Judging will be based on fan reaction.

WHAT, WHERE, and WHEN

What: Motor City Comic Con 2006

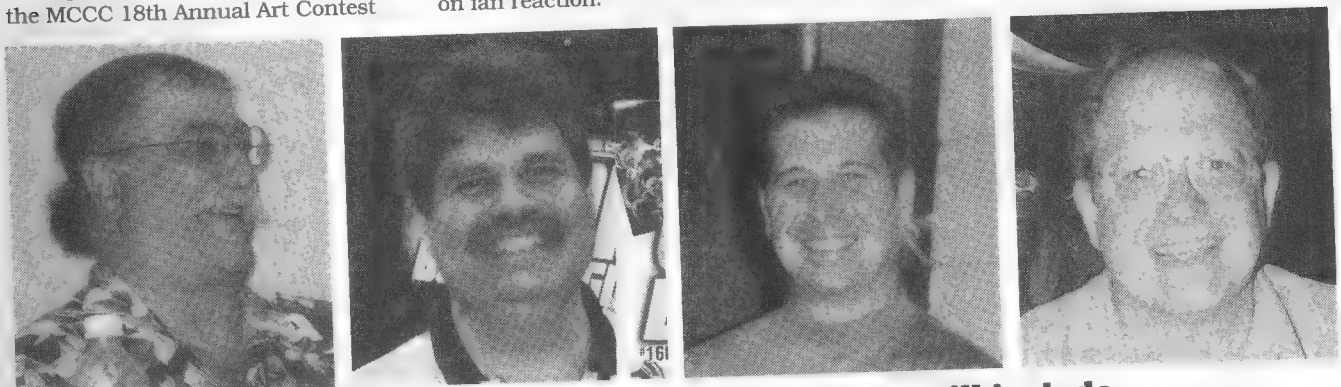
Where: Rock Financial Showplace, 46100 Grand River Ave., Novi, MI 48374

When: May 19-21

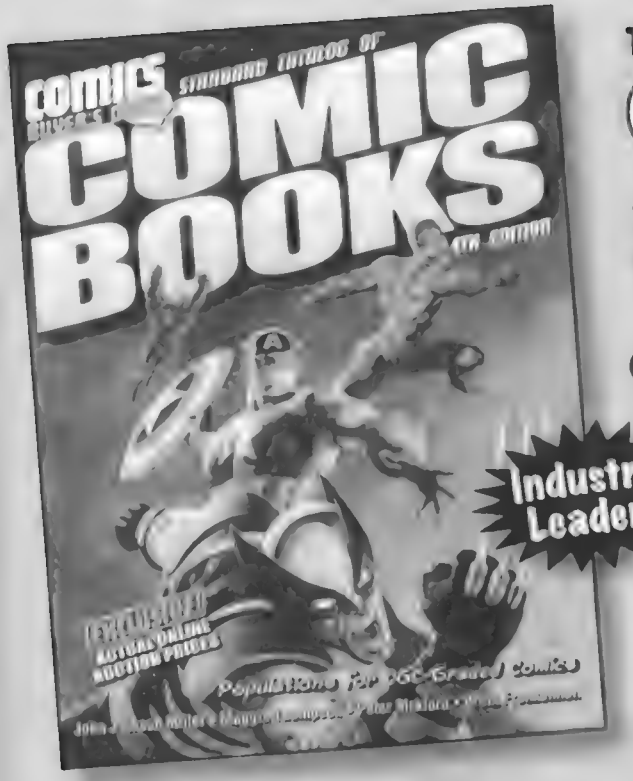
Hours: 1:30 p.m. to 7 p.m. Friday
10:30 a.m. to 6 p.m. Saturday
10:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. Sunday

Admission: Single-day: $20 for ages 11 and over, $10 for ages 6-10 with paid adult; Advance three-day: $45 for ages 11 and over, $20 for ages 6-10 with paid adult; At-door three-day: $50 for ages 11 and over, $25 for ages 6-10 with paid adult; ages 5 and under are free

For more information: *info@motorcitycomics.com; www.motorcitycon ventions.com/motor_city_comic_con/index.html*



Motor City Comic Con comic-book guests will include (from left) Sergio Aragonés, Mark Sparacio, Billy Tucci, and Mark Waid.



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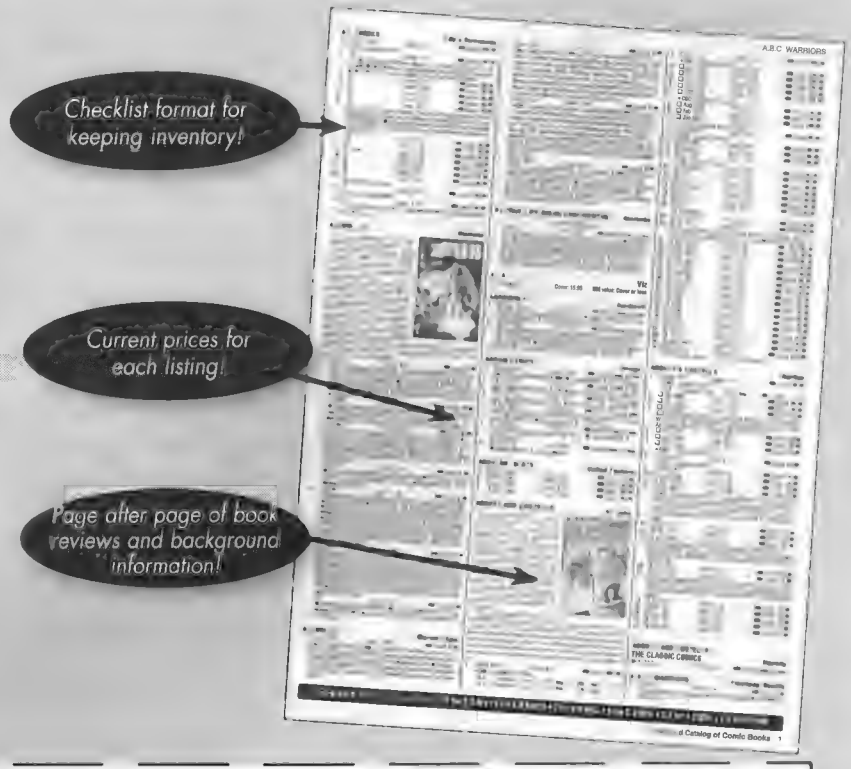

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Convention Calendar

By Ray Sidman

The most complete listing of comics events anywhere!

To have your event included, fax your listing to Mary McCarville at ***CBG* Con Calendar,** (715) 445-4087. The e-mail is *showscalendar@krause.com.*

ALABAMA

May 19-21 AL, Mobile. Mobicon 9, Ashbury Hotel & Stes. 600 S. Beltline Hwy. Mobicon Inc., PO Box 161632, Mobile, AL 36616.

CALIFORNIA

May 17 CA, City of Industry. Wed. Comic Book & Collectible Show. 19649 San Jose Ave, SH: 10am-5pm, T: 250, A: free. Frank Zamarripa, 19649 San Jose Ave., City of Industry, CA 91748. PH: 909-444-7955.

May 20 CA, City of Industry. Sat. Comic Book & Collectible Show. 19649 San Jose Ave, SH: 10am-5pm, T: 250, A: free. Frank Zamarripa, 19649 San Jose Ave., City of Industry, CA 91748. PH: 909-444-7955.

May 20-21 CA, Oakland. Super-Con, Convention Ctr.-Marriott Hotel. 10th & Broadway, SH: Sat. 10am-6pm, Sun. 10am-5pm, T: 120-8', F: $300., A: $15. daily, $20. for both days. Golden State Comic-Con Comic Book Shows, Steve Wyatt, PH: 661-829-2962 or 916-719-4477

May 24 CA, City of Industry. Wed. Comic Book & Collectible Show. 19649 San Jose Ave, SH: 10am-5pm, T: 250, A: free. Frank Zamarripa, 19649 San Jose Ave., City of Industry, CA 91748. PH: 909-444-7955.

May 27 CA, City of Industry. Sat. Comic Book & Collectible Show. 19649 San Jose Ave, SH: 10am-5pm, T: 250, A: free. Frank Zamarripa, 19649 San Jose Ave., City of Industry, CA 91748. PH: 909-444-7955.

May 31 CA, City of Industry. Wed. Comic Book & Collectible Show. 19649 San Jose Ave, SH: 10am-5pm, T: 250, A: free. Frank Zamarripa, 19649 San Jose Ave., City of Industry, CA 91748. PH: 909-444-7955.

Jun 3 CA, City of Industry. Sat. Comic Book & Collectible Show. 19649 San Jose Ave, SH: 10am-5pm, T: 250, A: free. Frank Zamarripa, 19649 San Jose Ave., City of Industry, CA 91748. PH: 909-444-7955.

Jun 7 CA, City of Industry. Wed. Comic Book & Collectible Show. 19649 San Jose Ave, SH: 3:30pm-9:30pm, T: 250, A: free. Frank Zamarripa, 19649 San Jose Ave., City of Industry, CA 91748. PH: 909-444-7955.

Jun 10 CA, City of Industry. Sat. Comic Book & Collectible Show. 19649 San Jose Ave, SH: 10am-5pm, T: 250, A: free. Frank Zamarripa, 19649 San Jose Ave., City of Industry, CA 91748. PH: 909-444-7955.

Jun 11 CA, Sacramento. Comic Book, Toy & Anime Show, Scottish Rite Ctr. 6151 H St., SH: 10am-4pm, T: 100-6', F: $50., A: $5. Dan Houck, 6278 Gloria Dr., Sacramento, CA 95831. PH: 916-607-1849.

Jun 14 CA, City of Industry. Wed. Comic Book & Collectible Show. 19649 San Jose Ave, SH: 10am-5pm, T: 250, A: free. Frank Zamarripa, 19649 San Jose Ave., City of Industry, CA 91748. PH: 909-444-7955.

Jun 17 CA, City of Industry. Sat. Comic Book & Collectible Show. 19649 San Jose Ave, SH: 10am-5pm, T: 250, A: free. Frank Zamarripa, 19649 San Jose Ave., City of Industry, CA 91748. PH: 909-444-7955.

Jun 21 CA, City of Industry. Wed. Comic Book & Collectible Show. 19649 San Jose Ave, SH: 10am-5pm, T: 250, A: free. Frank Zamarripa, 19649 San Jose Ave., City of Industry, CA 91748. PH: 909-444-7955.

Jun 24 CA, City of Industry. Sat. Comic Book & Collectible Show. 19649 San Jose Ave, SH: 10am-5pm, T: 250, A: free. Frank Zamarripa, 19649 San Jose Ave., City of Industry, CA 91748. PH: 909-444-7955.

Jun 28 CA, City of Industry. Wed. Comic Book & Collectible Show. 19649 San Jose Ave, SH: 10am-5pm, T: 250, A: free. Frank Zamarripa, 19649 San Jose Ave., City of Industry, CA 91748. PH: 909-444-7955.

Listings on the convention page are free! Have you sent in yours?

CONNECTICUT

May 28 CT, Plainville. Comic Book, Toy & Collectible Show, VFW. 7 Northwest Dr. (off Rte. 10), SH: 10am-4pm, T: 40-8', F: $35. for 1, $65. for 2, A: .99. Cliff Gorneault, 489 Wolcott St. Unit 39, Bristol, CT 06010. PH: 860-302-0493.

Jun 25 CT, Plainville. Comic Book, Toy & Collectible Show, VFW. 7 Northwest Dr. (off Rte. 10), SH: 10am-4pm, T: 40-8', F: $35. for 1, $65. for 2, A: .99. Cliff Gorneault, 489 Wolcott St. Unit 39, Bristol, CT 06010. PH: 860-302-0493.

DELAWARE

Jun 11 DE, Newark. Comic Books, Sports Cards, NASCAR & Coll. Show, Aetna Fire Hall. Rt. 273 W., SH: 10am-3pm, T: 50, A: $2., 12 & under free. Bob Harper, PH: 302-559-7962.

Jun 25 DE, Wilmington. Comic-Con & Toy Show, Mill Creek Fire Hall. 3900 Kirkwood Hwy., SH: 10am-4pm, T: 50, A: $3. PH: 302-559-7962.

ILLINOIS

May 21 IL, Springfield. Comic Book Convention, Signature Inn. 3090 Stevenson Dr., SH: 10am-4pm, A: free. Alan, PH: 309-657-1599.

May 28 IL, Orland Park. Comic Books, Sports Card & More Show, Civic Center. 147th St., 1 blk. W. La Grange Rd., SH: 9am-2pm, T: 60-6' & 8', F: $35.-$40., A: $1. John Leary, 9522 W. Shore Dr., Oak Lawn, IL 60453. PH: 708-423-1758.

Jun 3 IL, Orland Park. Comic Books, Sports Card & More Show, Civic Center. 147th St., 1 blk. W. La Grange Rd., SH: 9am-2pm, T: 60-6' & 8', F: $35.-$40., A: $1. John Leary, 9522 W. Shore Dr., Oak Lawn, IL 60453. PH: 708-423-1758.

INDIANA

Jun 25 IN, Indianapolis. Comic Book Show, Holiday Inn East. 6990 E. 21st St., SH: 9:30am-3:30pm. Ash Comics, Andy Holzman, 1947 Bechtel Rd., Indianapolis, IN 46260. PH: 317-824-9602.

IOWA

Jun 10 IA, Des Moines. Comic Book I-Con, Polk Cty. Convention Ctr. IA Comic Book Club Inc., PO Box 3604, Ash Creek Station, Des Moines, IA 50323.

MARYLAND

May 26-29 MD, Baltimore. Balticon 40, Marriott's Hunt Valley Inn. Balticon 40, PO Bxo 686, Baltimore, MD 21203.

MASSACHUSETTS

May 20 MA, Tewksbury. Supershow, Elks Hall. 777 South St., SH: 9am-2pm, F: $35. for 1, $60. for 2. Bob Larocque, 138 Kimball Hill Rd., Hudson, NH 03051. PH: 603-880-7528.

Jun 25 MA, South Attleboro. Comic Book, Toys, Non-Sports Card & Collectable Show, Knights of Columbus. 304 Highland Ave., SH: 10am-3pm, A: $3. My Mummy Prod., Harry Martin, PH: 508-384-8491.

MICHIGAN

May 19-21 MI, Novi. Motor City Comic Con, Rock Financial Showplace. 46100 Grand River, SH: Fri. 1:30pm-8pm, Sat. 10:30am-6pm, Sun. 10:30am-5pm, A: $20. per day, $50. for 3 day pass, 6-10 $10. per day, 5 & under free. Motor City Conventions, Michael Goldman or Gary Bishop, PH: 248-426-8059 or www.motorcityconventions.com

Jun 25 MI, Livonia. X-Trava-Con, Knights of Columbus Hall. 19801 Farmington Rd., SH: 10am-4pm, F: $50., A: $3. Motor City Conventions, Michael Goldman or Gary Bishop. PH: 248-426-8059.

MISSOURI

Jun 25 MO, Saint Louis. Comic Book & Toy Show, American Legion Post III. 7300 Lansdowne, SH: 10:30am-2:30pm, T: 40, F: $30., A: $2. Anthony Gladish, 4253 Fatima Dr. #3, St. Louis, MO 63123. PH: 314-544-2812.

NEW JERSEY

Jun 4 NJ, Wayne. Comic Book, Toy & Collectible Show, Co. #1 Firehouse. 1 Parish Dr. off Rt. 23 N., Lincoln Park Exit, SH: 8am-3pm, T: 80, A: $2, under 12 free. Phil De Mario, PO Box 4094, Wayne, NJ 07474. PH: 973-726-9897.

NEW YORK

Jun 10-11 NY, New York City. 5th Annual Art Festival, Puck Building. 295 Lafayette St., A: $8. daily, $10. wknd. MOCCA, 594 Broadway, Ste. 401, New York, NY 10012. PH: 212-254-3511.

Jun 24-25 NY, New York City. Big Apple Con, Penn Plaza Pavilion. 401 7th Ave. at 33rd St. PH: 201-865-3288.

NORTH CAROLINA

Jun 30-Jul 2 NC, Charlotte. HeroesCon, Convention Ctr. 501 S. College. Heroes Aren't Hard to Find, PO Box 9181, Charlotte, NC 28299. PH: 704-375-7463.

OHIO

Jun 4 OH, Cleveland. Comic & Sci-Fi Con, Knight's Party Center. KOC Hall, 29101 Euclid Ave. (.5 mi. E. of I-90 & Exit 186), SH: 10am-3pm, T: 35-8', F: $55., A: $2., 6 & under free. Jeff Harper, 5220 Loma Linda NE, Canton, OH 44714. PH: 330-499-6056.

OREGON

May 21 OR, Eugene. Comic Book & Collectible Show, Lane Cty. Fairgrounds. SH: 10am-4pm, F: $45., A: $4., under 8 free. Anthony Eberle, 1930 Stonecrest Dr., Eugene, OR 97401. PH: 503-799-1312.

PENNSYLVANIA

May 19-20 PA, Philadelphia. 5th Annual East Coast Black Age of Comics Convention, Temple University-Anderson Hall Rm. 845. 1114 W. Berks St. PH: 215-204-1993, FAX: 215-204-8171.

Send in your free convention listing now!

May 20 PA, Allentown. Comic Con, Merchant Square Mall. 1901 S. 12th St., SH: 10am-4pm, A: $3. Ultimate Comic Dreams, 972 W. Washington St., Allentown, PA 18102. PH: 610-351-3900.

Jun 2-4 PA, Philadelphia. Wizard World Philadelphia Convention Ctr. John Rafacz, PH: 310-274-7800.

Jun 15-18 PA, Pittsburgh. Anthrocon, David L. Lawrence Convention Ctr. Anthrocon Inc., PO Box 476, Malvern, PA 19355.

Jun 25 PA, Scranton. Comic Book Convenion, Clarion Hotel. 300 Meadow Ave., SH: 10am-4pm, T: 50-8', F: $60. for 1, $55. ea. for 2 or more, A: $3., under 6 free. Jodia Promos., Joseph Figured, 81 Sunset Ln., Cogan Station, PA 17728. PH: 570-327-1486.

SOUTH CAROLINA

May 27 SC, Greenville. Comic Book Show, Consort Inn & Stes. 412 Maultin Rd., SH: 10am-4pm, A: $1. Rick, PH: 704-424-3453.

TENNESSEE

Jun 3-4 TN, Sparta. Sports Cards, Comic Books, Coins, Toys & More Show, Fairgrounds-Agricultural Complex. SH: 9am-6pm, T: 60, F: $40., A: free. Wesley Richards, PH: 931-761-7154.

Jun 24-25 TN, Knoxville. Adventure Con, Convention Ctr. 701 Henley St., T: 400, A: $8. Marcus Wollack, 1623 Montvale Rd., Maryville, TN 37803. PH: 865-984-4476.

TEXAS

May 20 TX, San Antonio. Super-Hero & Sci-Fi Comic Con, Crowne Plaza Hotel. 1111 NE Loop 410, SH: 10am-5pm. PH: 512-396-0368.

May 21 TX, Irving. Comic Book Show, Harvey Hotel-DFW Airport S. 4545 W. John Carpenter Fwy., SH: 10am-4pm, T: 20-6', F: $50., A: $2. JMV Entertainment, PO Box 151, Temple, TX 76503. PH: 254-774-7824 or 760-8682.

Jun 4 TX, Houston. Comic Book Show, Hilton Southwest. 6780 Southwest Fwy., SH: 10am-4pm, T: 25-6', F: $50., A: $2. JMV Entertainment, PO Box 151, Temple, TX 76503. PH: 254-774-7824 or 760-8682.

VIRGINIA

Jun 11 VA, Dunn Loring. Comic Book, Toy & Sports Card Show, Volunteer Fire Dept. 2148 Gallows Rd., F: $95. for 1, $90. for 2nd, $85. ea. add'l. Capital Assoc., 906 S. Kenwood Ave., Baltimore, MD 21224.

WISCONSIN

May 28-31 WI, Madison. WisCon 30, Concourse Hotel. 1 W. Dayton St. WisCon 30, PO Box 1624, Madison, WI 53701.

Jun 4 WI, West Allis. Comic Book Show, Burnham Bowl. 6016 W. Burnham Ave., SH: 11am-4pm, A: $2. Henry, PH: 414-476-5596 or Clayton, PH: 414-328-3675.

Jun 17 WI, Green Bay. Non-Sports, Trading Card Game, Role Playing Game Show, East Town Mall. 2350 E. Mason St., SH: 10am-4pm, T: 40-6', A: free. Troy Leanna, PO Box 10863, Green Bay, WI 54307. PH: 920-429-0101.

ALBERTA

May 27 AB, Calgary. Comic & Toy xpo, McMahon Stadium-Red & White Club. 1817 Crowchild Trl., SH: 10am-5pm, T: 70, A: $5., ages 8 & under free. Donna Fuller, 631 Pioneer Dr., PO Box 393, Irricana, AB T0M 1B0. PH: 403-935-4669.

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- Mike Curtis

4122 COMIC COLLECTIONS FOR SALE

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4128 DARK HORSE FOR SALE/ WANTED

WANTED: JOSS Whedon's Fray issues #7 and #8. Willie Williams, 101 Santee St., Asheville, NC 28801.

4130 DC, FOR SALE

GOLDEN, SILVER, Bronze, Modern Age comics, dealer 20N, Fox River Antique Mall, Appleton, Wisconsin- located South of Fox River Mall next to Saturn Dealer.

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I DON'T like DC Comics anymore, so I'm selling my collection. Please send $3.00 for a list of my comics to Bruce Bender, Apt. 164, 2828 Walnut Bend Lane, Houston, TX. 77042.

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4131 DC, WANTED

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4140 DELL/GOLD KEY/WHITMAN FOR SALE

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4150 DISNEY, FOR SALE

SUPERMAN 83 G- $35; 84 G- $35; 87 G $38.50; 92 VG+ $84; 93 VG+ $84; 97 VG/VG+ $63; 99 VG+ $70. Neil 973-248-8449.

4161 EC, WANTED

COMPLETE EC library with slipcase by Russ Cochran. All volumes wanted. Contact: John Knight, PO Box 1176, Crystal Bay, NV 89402. Email: cbj77@sbcglobal.net. 775-832-9217.

4181 FOREIGN, WANTED

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4185 GRADED COMICS FOR SALE

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4204 IMAGE FOR SALE/ WANTED

NEED "CREED: Utopiate" #2B, #3, #4; Also #1 and #2 original series from Hall of Heroes. Write: Howard Michaels Jr, 706 N Cottage, Mercer, PA 16137-5310.

WANTED: J.M. Straczynski's Rising Stars issues #22, #23, #24. Willie Williams, 101 Santee St., Asheville, NC 28801.

4210 MARVEL/TIMELY, FOR SALE

TIMELY- ATLAS- Marvel: 100's of romance, teen humor and funny books for sale. Send wantlists to: moondog100@comcast.net or 800-344-6060.

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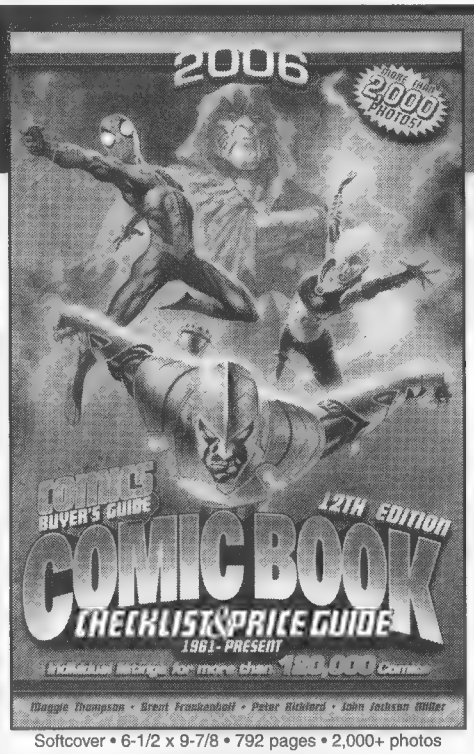

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Vote!

CBG Fan Awards nominations are in! Check 'em out!

Find the ballot in this issue.

Take a look at the story nominees here.

Then vote!

by **MAGGIE THOMPSON**

Though favorite creators are something of a touchstone among voters (if they're your favorites, you probably have some idea of why), the specific novel and story eligibilities from 2005 may not be as fresh in readers' minds.

So here's a reminder of the credits on the stories you'll find on this year's ***CBG*** Fan Awards Final Ballot in this issue:

Captain America (5th Series) [Marvel] "Winter Soldier" by Ed Brubaker, Steve Epting, Mike Perkins, Michael Lark
#8 (Sep 05)
#9 (Oct 05)
#11 (Nov 05)
#12 (Dec 05)
NOTE: #10 (Oct 05) was a "House of M" tie-in and not part of the "Winter Soldier" arc.

Fables [DC/Vertigo] Bill Willingham, Mark Buckingham, Steve Leialoha, David Hahn, Lan Medina, Dan Green
#31 (Jan 05)
#32 (Feb 05)
#33 (Mar 05)
#34 (Apr 05)
#35 (May 05)
#36 (Jun 05)
#37 (Jul 05)
#38 (Aug 05)
#39 (Sep 05)
#40 (Oct 05)
#41 (Nov 05)
#42 (Dec 05)

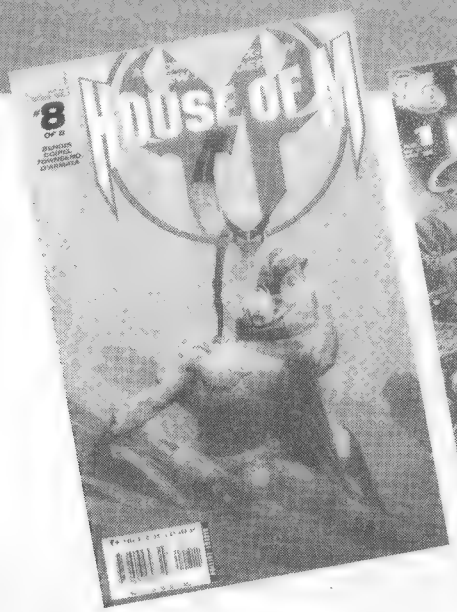
The Fountain [DC/Vertigo] (2005) ISBN: 1-4012-0059-1 Darron Aronofsky, Kent Williams

House of M [Marvel] Brian Michael Bendis, Olivier Coipel, John Dell, Scott Hanna, Rick Magyar, Tim Townsend
#1 (Jul 05)
#2 (Aug 05)
#3 (Sep 05)
#4 (Sep 05)
#5 (Oct 05)
#6 (Oct 05)
#7 (Nov 05)
#8 (Dec 05)

Infinite Crisis #1 (Dec 05) [DC] Geoff Johns, Phil Jimenez, Andy Lanning

JSA [DC] Geoff Johns, Dave Gibbons, Don Kramer, Leonard Kirk, James Hodgkins, Keith Champagne,

CBG XTRA ONLINE REPORTS! Have you already voted at www.cbgxtra.com? You've got till June 1 — or use the ballot in this issue!



Stephen Sadowski, Michael Bair, David Lopez, Fernando Blanco
- #67 (Jan 05)
- #68 (Feb 05)
- #69 (Mar 05)
- #70 (Apr 05)
- #75 (May 05)
- #72 (Jun 05)
- #73 (Jul 05)
- #74 (Aug 05)
- #75 (Sep 05)
- #76 (Oct 05)
- #77 (Nov 05)
- #78 (Dec 05)

New Avengers [Marvel] Brian Michael Bendis, David Finch, Danny Miki, Mark Morales, Allen Martinez, Victor Olazaba, Steve McNiven, Sal Buscema, John Dell
- #1 (Jan 05)
- #2 (Feb 05)
- #3 (Mar 05)
- #4 (Apr 05)
- #5 (May 05)
- #6 (Jun 05)
- #7 (Jul 05)
- #8 (Aug 05)
- #9 (Sep 05)
- #10 (Oct 05)
- #11 (Nov 05)
- #12 (Dec 05)

The Plot: The Secret Story of the Protocols of the Elders of Zion [W.W. Norton] (2005) ISBN: 0-393-06045-4 Will Eisner

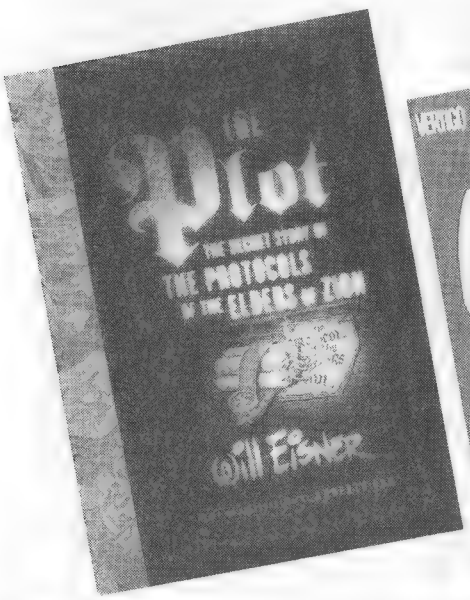
The Quitter [DC/Vertigo] (2005) Harvey Pekar, Dean Haspiel, Lee Loughridge ISBN 1-4012-0399-X

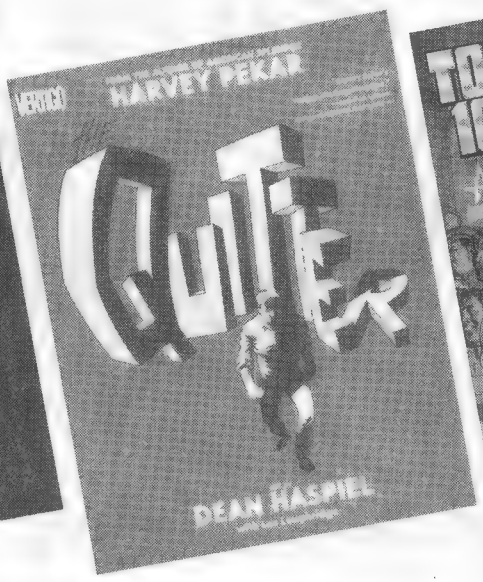
Top 10: The Forty-Niners [DC/America's Best Comics] (2005) ISBN: 1-56389-757-1 Alan Moore, Gene Ha

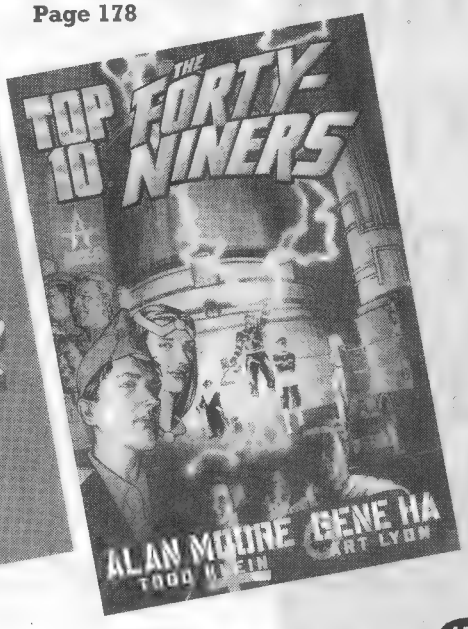
Tricked [Top Shelf] (2005) (Jul 05) ISBN: 1-891830-73-2 Alex Robinson

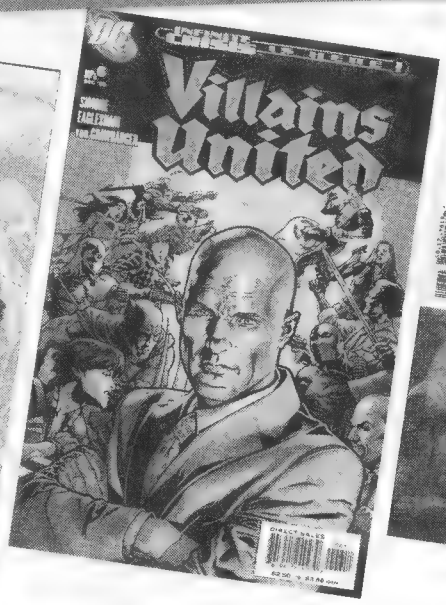
Villains United [DC] Gail Simone, Dale Eaglesham, Wade von Grawbadger, Val Semeiks, Prentis Rollins
- #1 (Jul 05)
- #2 (Aug 05)
- #3 (Sep 05)
- #4 (Oct 05)
- #5 (Nov 05)
- #6 (Dec 05)

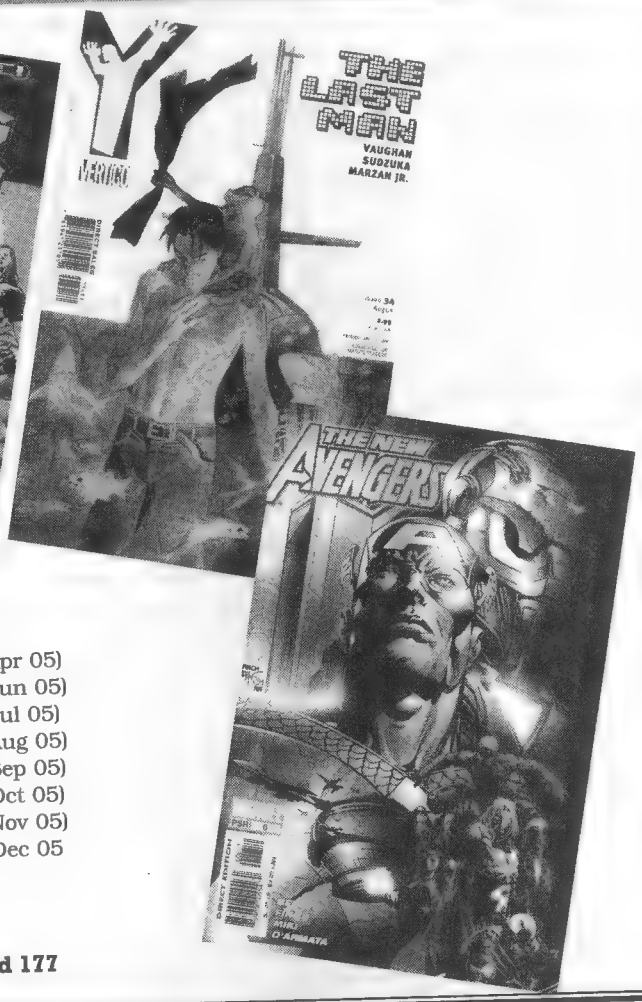
See more nominees on Page 178











Y: The Last Man
[DC/Vertigo] Brian K. Vaughan, Pia Guerra, Jose Marzan Jr., Goran Sudzuka
#28 (Jan 05)
#29 (Feb 05)
#30 (Mar 05)
#31 (Apr 05)
#32 (Jun 05)
#33 (Jul 05)
#34 (Aug 05)
#35 (Sep 05)
#36 (Oct 05)
#37 (Nov 05)
#38 (Dec 05

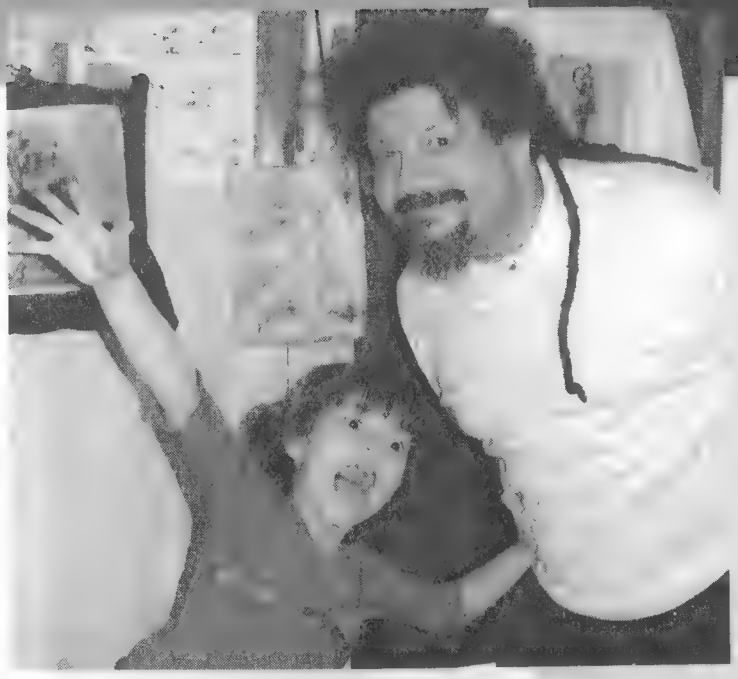
See more nominees on Page 176 and 177

The Javits Center show was big, big, big! *TOO* big?

NYC in February

A new venue, a new show!

The Jacob K. Javits Convention Center in New York City at 655 W. 34th St. is an enormous site that has played host to comics conventions in the past — but not for several years. So no one knew quite what to expect from the new attempt to establish a comics convention in the city that is home to DC and Marvel. Four halls were booked, with Javits Center occupancy specifications as follows: 1E (sessions): 3,090; 1D (events): 3,045, 4 Galleria (gaming):



Above left: Irwin Hasen drew for Golden Age comic books — and then created the* Dondi *comic strip. Above right: Kyle Baker's booth featured his work — and that of his daughter Lillian. Below, left to right: Steve Geppi and Bill Cole posed at the Diamond booth.

potentially 13,100 ; — and 1C (exhibits, aka dealers' room): 2,670. Even with 80,000 sq. ft. for that dealers' room, well, consider. Supposedly, 40,000 people were turned away. If the entirety of the Javits Center were to be devoted to the show and every large room (as opposed to small meeting rooms) were filled, the site's online information indicates organizers could jam 13,825 on Level 1 (where the show was held) and another 14,702 on Level 3. That's a total attendance of 28,527.

So two things seem clear right now: New York City wants a big comics convention, and it may not have a site big enough to handle one. Yikes.

But organzers say they're already planning next year's event, and you can bet they're struggling with the overwhelming success of this one, which (by the way) really might be able to provide what many have been calling for: a major con with major stars with its major focus on, yes, comics.

See you there in 2007?

Most of the people who could get into the show were delighted to see a major show in New York City at last.

The Romitas turned out for the event. (Left to right above:) Virginia, John, and — at the Marvel booth — John Junior.

Outreach

In 2006, people are using comics to reach out to support a variety of activities — including the field of comic books themselves.

Several presentations at the NYC comics show provided examples of the uses of comics in reaching out to promote goals.

Caregiver Credit

For example, even discounting her early work on the editorial staff of Harvey Kurtzman's *Help!* magazine, Gloria Steinem has had connections with the field of comics, most notable among these until now being the 1980s Wonder Woman Foundation, which honored individual outstanding women.

Nevertheless, many convention attendees were surprised to see her at a show booth. The booth was that of TR Rose Associates, "a women's think tank and advocacy group," which was selling copies of the first issue of *The Adventures of Carrie Giver*, written by Theresa Funiciello with Diane Pagen, pencilled by Eduardo Savid, and inked by Rob Hawkins — with a cover by Neal Adams. The goal of the organization is to convert the federal Child Tax Credit to a Caregiver Credit. "Whether done by a mother or father, son, daughter, or any responsible loved one, whoever shoulders the caregiving responsibilities has to choose between taking time off of paid work, remaining out of the job market, or leaving a paying job; it is a matter of dollars and cents." The group calls for coverage of care of frail, disabled, or ailing adults in addition to children; to help make its points, it is selling the *Carrie Giver* comic book. It features a woman with ESP who can astrally project herself as a super-hero to help others. At the same time,she is director of "the women's division of the Department of Labor."

The organization's announcement said, "American comic book artist Neal Adams has provided the cover art in support for the book's social justice message of helping unpaid family caregivers as they contribute to our economy and sustain our society."

More information on the project is available from Caregiver Credit Campaign, P.O. Box 2957, Grand Central Station, New York, NY

Yes, that's Gloria Steinem (left), appearing with TR Rose Associates Executive Director Theresa Funiciello and Neal Adams, to promote the* Carrie Giver *campaign.

10163, and from *www.caregivercredit.org* (though by press time there was no information on the site concerning orders for the comic book).

Comic Book Legal Defense Fund

At another booth at the Javits Center event, the Comic Book Legal Defense Fund was providing a spot at which attendees could sign a large vinyl version of the national flag of Denmark to show solidarity with cartoonists targeted as a result of the international controversy over political cartoons, and early in the show it was already well covered with sketches and signatures. The project was the idea of writer-artist Colleen Doran. CBLDF Executive Director Charles Brownstein said, "Everyone who loves comics understands the power of images, and most of us are aghast at how the lines these cartoonists put on paper has provoked violence rather than dialogue. When Colleen put this flag together, it was intended as a way for American cartoonists and comics professionals to express their solidarity with the Danish cartoonists facing persecution, and to emphasize the value we all place on freedom of expression."

At the CBLDF booth at the Javits Center con (left to right): CBLDF Deputy Director Greg Thompson, Colleen Doran, and CBLDF Executive Director Charles Brownstein displayed the flag that many had already signed.

Though some reports indicated that the flag has already been sold, such a sale is still in the future. The flag will be auctioned this summer "to support the free speech advocacy work of the Comic Book Legal Defense Fund." The organization is a non-profit "dedicated to the preservation of First Amendment rights for members of the comics community."

FCBD

The fifth Free Comic Book Day will be May 6 in 2006, and companies are already making plans to reach out in a number of communities.

Keep in mind that the word "free" applies only to the customer — and we're all glad to see customers new and old. The idea here is to reach out to all customers, existing and potential, to demonstrate that comics are entertaining, informative, and a true art form. Oh, and that they still exist — *lots* of them — in lots of different types.

The idea was proposed in ***CBG***'s sister publication *Comics & Games Retailer* #113 (Aug 01), and the first of the annual events was held May 4, 2002, in conjunction with the release of the first Spider-Man movie. It was so successful that every year has seen increasing support.

But the word "free" *doesn't* apply to the distributor, the publishers, the creators, or the retailers who bring this annual circus to your town (or, at least, a town nearby). They spend much money and/or time to bring readers a variety of comics with a variety of different messages. (As just one example: Last year, Archie Comics reintroduced Katy Keene — see page 38 — to test her appeal, and the responses led to more appearances.)

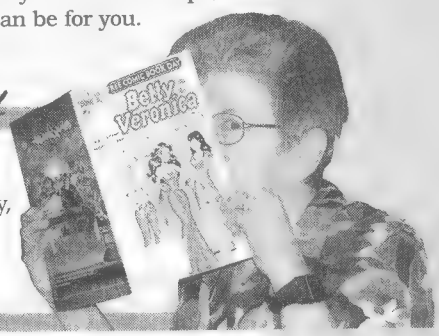
So see what the industry has to say to *you* this year the first Saturday in May. Check out the stores near you — and, heck, why not make a day of it with your family and/or friends? Look at *www.freecomicbookday.com* to learn the latest in your area. (If you can't find a shop nearby, try a *Yellow Pages* hunt on the Internet with, say, "comic book" as your search.) Not all shops participate in the event itself (see the discussion of "free" above), but it's a great idea to familiarize yourself with all the comics opportunities your area has to offer.

The more you support your comics shops, the better those shops can be for you.

Where will you be on May 6?

How many comics shops will you visit that Saturday?

How about taking a friend?



MAGGIE THOMPSON is considering trying her hand at designing some sort of outfit for Katy Keene. Have *you* considered trying it? See Page 39 of this issue. As you probably know already, Maggie can be reached at 700 East State St., Iola, WI 54945, or *ohso@krause.com*. And, for day-in-day-out contact, you can see what she's writing at *www.CBGXtra.com*. Oh, and did I remind you to *vote*?

LETTERS FROM OUR READERS

Write to us at
Comics Buyer's Guide OH, SO?
700 E. State St. • Iola, WI 54990
ohso@krause.com
www.cbgxtra.com

PAST, PRESENT, AND FUTURE

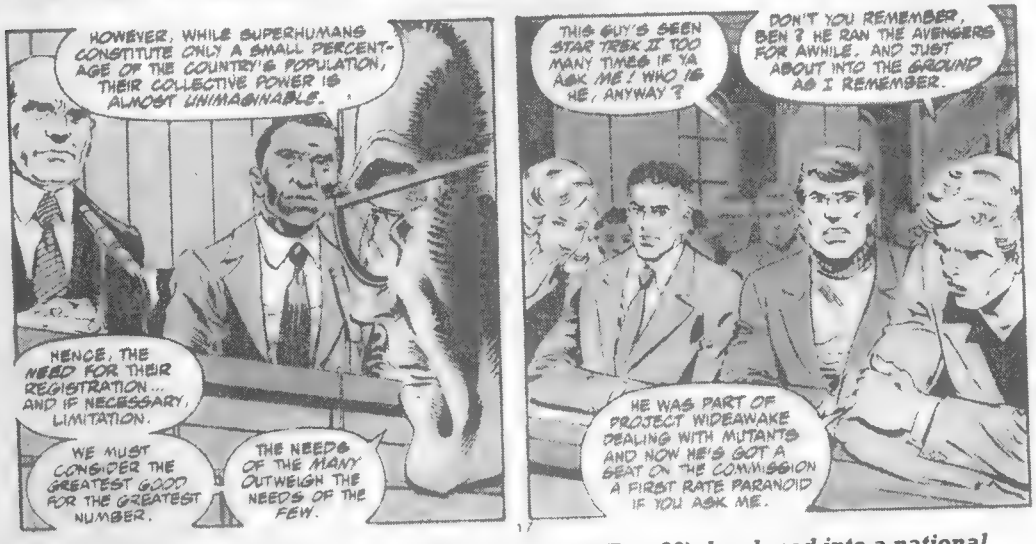
Rick Shiu

This is a question regarding how current writers either pay tribute to the writers and stories of the past by spinning off or expanding on previous plots and how they come up with new ideas — and if they fact-check and research past events to ensure there are no conflicts in continuity.

I was wondering if the forthcoming Marvel "Civil War" storyline by Mark Millar was inspired in any way by Walt Simonson's "Acts of Vengeance" story about the proposed Super Hero Registration Act from *Fantastic Four*, more than a decade and a half ago.

Also, for Brian Michael Bendis: Does he research historical events in the Marvel universe to either influence or ensure that continuity is maintained? Specifically for the *Avengers Illuminati*, with Reed Richards as a member and the team being created in 2005 but written as if they existed for many years: Does he research various stories? This is especially curious, since Reed Richards was in a government courtroom fighting the Super Hero Registration Act featured in *Fantastic Four*, Vol. I #336 (Jan 90).

I'd like to see a feature article interviewing various writers and posing this question and, possibly, seeing where continuity conflicts may have accidentally occurred as well as get turned onto older stories that inspired the current stories of today, or any major storyline, such as with the *Identity Crisis* mindsweep from those old *JLA* issues, the House of M and Avenger's Dark Scarlet Witch from *West Coast*



Dinner-table discussion in* Fantastic Four *#334 (Dec 89) developed into a national discussion in* Fantastic Four *#335 (Dec 89), with The FF ready to appear before Congress.

CBG XTRA ONLINE BONUS! Don't want to wait to share your opinion? Log in now at www.cbgxtra.com, visit the Oh, So forum, and post away!

Avengers by John Byrne, and, most recently, the Marvel Zombies spin-off from *Ultimate Fantastic Four*.

In* Fantastic Four *#336 (Jan 90), Reed Richards analyzed super-hero legislation.

SUPER-HEROES 101

Christopher Allen
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Dallas, TX 75354

DC did big "event" mini-series following the conclusion of *Identity Crisis*, setting up *Infinite Crisis*. All are now available in trade-paperback collections — where they are an even better value, because they include related issues from other titles, in addition to the main mini-series. The one I was least interested in has proven to be perhaps the best: the story of the effect of these major events on the magical community of the DC universe, called *Day of Vengeance*.

I ought not be surprised. I've been a Bill Willingham fan since he was doing spot art for TSR's *Dungeons & Dragons* rulebooks and I've been pretty consistently impressed with work he has only written, as well (especially Lone Star Press' *Pantheon* series), and I knew as well that Justiniano could be counted on to produce clean, stylish art in Willingham's absence. But I held off buying the mini-series initially for two reasons: I have been less enthused with Willingham's "non-super-heroic" scripting — and magic in the DC universe can be so wonky and cornball, owing to its dated origins, that I mostly just prefer to ignore the DC universe's supernatural characters.

Willingham's take on the series, however, proved to be right out of Super-Heroes 101 (let's form a team!), and, given my fondness for his work in that *oeuvre*, the only thing he then had to overcome was my problem with magic in the DC universe. Which he did, by setting out to systematically destroy it.

As it happens, magic and magical characters are little more than a McGuffin to get the things Willingham and the DC editorial powers that be have chosen to address where they need to be, by series' end. All of the "universe mechanics" the mini-series is set up to deal with are handled with such panache they never feel forced or set up, or intrude on the story. That's a feat of writerly technique on which more of the deconstructionist comics writers currently in vogue in the industry should take notes.

Beyond that, what makes *Day of Vengeance* so good isn't the "major changes to the face of the DC universe" that occur therein, well-handled or not; at the end of the Day, what Willingham does here is take a handful of also-ran DC characters and make of them a new "super-team" that the reader cannot help but care about, cheer for, and hope to read more of. I finished *Day of Vengeance* with the same kind of feeling I've had when reading the best *X-Men* runs or Wolfman-Pérez *Teen Titans* or — perhaps most aptly — the whole run of John Ostrander's vastly underappreciated *Suicide Squad* (or Bill Willingham's *Elementals*, come to think of it): that I was eavesdropping on a genuine, believable "family" of characters, whom I wanted to see succeed. And wanted to see again.

Willingham's definition of "magical character" is fortunately broad; if you are fan of the DC universe, there are cameos galore (from much-missed old favorites like Warlord's Jennifer Morgan and I, Vampire to intriguing characters I'd never met, like Witchfire and Valda the Iron Maiden), and the main characters who come to form his Shadowpact include such unexpected but welcome presences as Nightshade and Blue Devil (who is just great here and, frankly, steals the mini-series).

I am informed this Shadowpact will get a title of their own, following the climax of *Infinite Crisis* ... with Willingham both writing *and* drawing.

I will be there from #1, magic or no.

PLEASURE AND PRACTICALITY

Moose Mattson, Owner
Main Vein Comics, Collectibles & Creepy Stuff
74 Federal St.
Greenfield, MA 01301

I wanted to react to two separate letters that I saw in the letters page of ***CBG*** #1616. First off, "pleasure." (In this letter, the "business" is coming *after* the pleasure!) I wanted to chirp in my opinion to John Genduso's letter "Five Years of Favorites." Adding to his list I've got to include:

The Avengers (Marvel). I thought that the Busiek — then Johns — run on *Avengers* was phenomenal. Just when the book was getting really good, DC swept Johns away (much to the chagrin of this fan and Avengers fans, period!), and the book was canceled shortly thereafter and relaunched as *New Avengers*. Though sales are steady on the retitled book,

It is not possible to publish all letters received, and we cannot reply to letters that we don't print. Letters submitted to *Oh, So?* for publication become the property of F+W Publications. Letters will be edited and may be cut due to length and other considerations. If any of your message — including your address — is *not* for publication, please indicate that in your message.

I yearn for the "classic" Avengers team, which gave a warm home to character like Black Knight, Hank Pym, The Wasp, Hercules, *et al.*

The Spectre (DC Comics) The J.M DeMatteis-Ryan Sook book was, plainly put, one hell of an experience. DeMatteis *has* to be one of comicdom's most overlooked contributors. Though Sook only lasted a few issues, the artists who followed him continued the style and feel (Russell, Hamilton, Breyfogle, *etc.*). I don't think this series is available in trade but I would urge fans to search the back-issue bins for this forgotten treasure.

The Marquis (Oni Press). Guy Davis has been churning out this tale of faith and debauchery over the last five years when he's able between "paying jobs" for Dark Horse and Marvel. I recommend this series to any comics fan for a wonderfully illustrated journey through the macabre world of the Inquisition and morality itself.

Rex Mundi (Image). I remember reading a blurb about #0 selling out and had my friend snag me a copy from a shop on the East Coast (at the time I was living out West and couldn't find a single copy). So my "investment" turned into one of the best purchases in my years of reading. *Rex Mundi* continues to deliver an eerie tale mixing history, politics, religion, murder, and mystery; my hat goes off to Arvid Nelson (and the now-departed Eric J) for creating a truly unusual comic.

Hulk (Marvel). I thought the Paul Jenkins-Bruce Jones-John Romita Jr. run on *The Hulk* was, well *incredible*. As disappointed I was with Jenkins leaving the book, Jones wrote an equally compelling story (heavy on the X-Files-black ops-conspiracy theories) with lush JRJr. art (exquisitely inked by Tom "Titan" Palmer). I will admit that, once Romita left, I thought the story got a bit out of control and I did fall off, but I recommend the latter issues, as well (all available in trade format, too), and you can't forget those *gorgeous* Kaare Andrews covers! Additionally, The Peter David "Tempest Fugit" story arc (illustrated by Lee Weeks — why is this guy *not* on a book regularly?) was also fantastic.

Can't close without tipping my hat to *JSA*, which John Genduso already praised in his letter; this book should be #1 and read by *all*!

OK, down to business. I was also compelled to write after reading Derrick DeVore's letter, "Business Sense." I am a small comics-shop owner and nearing my two-year anniversary May 27. I run into similar situations daily in terms of pricing and customers like DeVore. Like many small businesses, I cannot compete with the larger chains' pricing based on the volume they purchase. The success of my business is largely due to the loyalty of my customer base. (Only five of which read ***CBG***, so don't think I'm trying to butter any of them up — though I have been trying to convert the MTV generation to ***CBG*** ... That's another letter in itself!) For years I personally employed DeVore's ideology on less money spent means more product purchased for said consumer — that is, until I became a small-business owner myself.

Sadly, I don't really "collect" any more; as many other comics shop owners will tell you, we purge our collections into the store and it becomes "stock." Personally, I spend my money on music (compact discs) and used to go the 20 minutes out of my way to save an extra couple bucks on the latest CD; then, one of the local record-store employees started shopping at my store, and I quickly thought, you know, I should start returning the favor by giving them my business, as well. So I did and, sure, I pay a little extra but I feel better contributing to a small business (like myself) *and* enjoy the interpersonal exchange between the employees and me. (One employee and I have a really great rapport.) In addition, he is very generous with any promotional material the store gets, special-ordering things for me and, more times than not, hand-delivering my purchase to me at my shop!

Like him, I try to give that "little extra" to my customer(s), as well, when I'm able, whether it's a poster or promo item, maybe a "freebie"

FOR ART'S SAKE

by Chris Smigliano

LastKiss Comics.com™ By John Lustig

At first, ***Shirley Smelmoor*** was just a hardworking deodorant model--testing the ***olfactory limits*** of the latest pit protection devised by ***Dismal Hygiene, Inc.!*** But then a new, experimental deodorant is accidentally mixed with radioactive ore! (Don't ask how! It doesn't make sense to us either!) And Shirley becomes ***Ms. Sniff--the Maid of Malodorous Might!***

Art by George Tuska

What happens next? Find out in our next sinus-scorching adventure: "I'll love you forever...as long as you're downwind!"

comic out of a collection I bought that I know someone has been dying to get his mitts on: something that will endear me to customers, to make them want to frequent my store. I know money talks, but personality still goes a loooong way.

Recently, a "newbie" came into my store and commended me on my affability, stating that, if he didn't live so far away (some 50 miles), he'd fill out a subscription service for my store. Regardless of whether he becomes a regular or casual customer, it made me feel good to know my projection as a shop owner is a positive one.

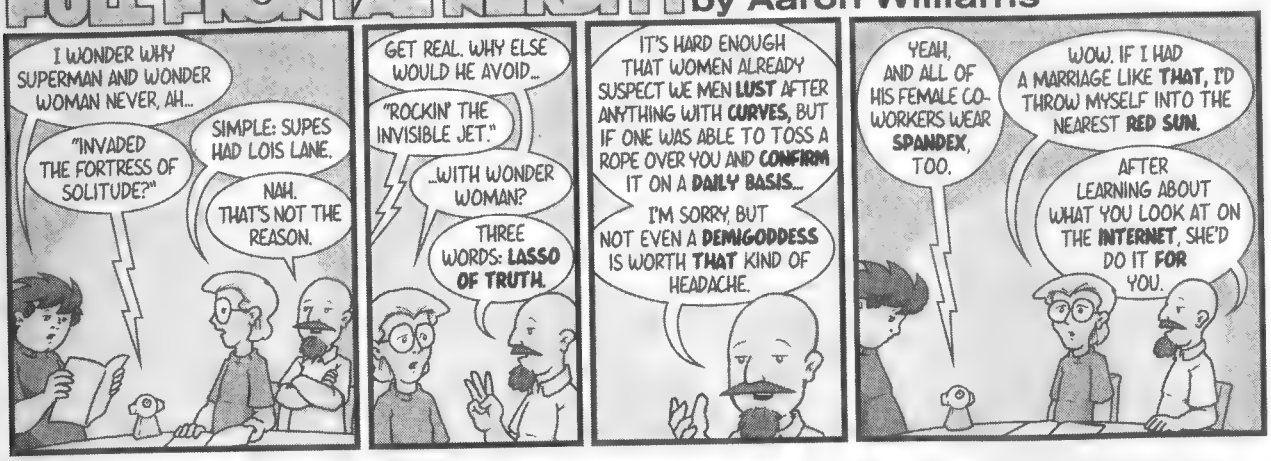
Long before I was "in the biz," I was a customer and was disappointed with most of the comic-book stores in my former area, which is why I never really had a "store" that I went to regularly. As a proprietor, I want to welcome into my store the kind of customer I used to be. I enjoy being on a name-by-name basis with my customers; I'm interested in how they are doing, how their family is, what's on their mind. *et al.* I always ask to be remembered to their respective wife, husband, child, significant other, *etc.* — and not just because it sounds good. I truly care about my customers; if I don't see one of my regulars for a few weeks I start to worry, especially with the over-60 crowd. Maybe "big businesses" do, as well, but I don't really get that feeling from them.

Most "small" comics stores are on a very tight mark-up on new items (personally, my clientele doesn't merit larger purchasing from Diamond, which would ultimately yield larger discounts), so whenever I can, I try to give a little back to my customers (through second-hand items and back issues). Sure, business is about money, but not solely — at least, not a long-term successful one. It's more important to me to form a relationship with my customers; and, as with any relationship, it's give and take; we *both* have to care about each other. I can't tell you how many of my customers ask me about my five-month-old son, how he's doing, how big he's getting, long before the words, "What have you got for me this week?" are even spoken.

My customers are smart; they understand that some of the items in my store are going to be a bit more pricey (not by much, maybe a few dollars on a Marvel Legends action figure) than the big chains. It's a quandary: If I don't stock the item, they are forced to go elsewhere; if I do order the item(s) it's going to cost them a bit more. Ironically, most don't blink an eye at it; maybe they are too pragmatic and realize that, once you factor in gas, time, and hassle, maybe they feel it's easier to buy from me.

I'd like to think some do so because they like my store and want to see it succeed. And those who refuse to pay the extra and wait until the next family excursion to the "Big Store"? That is their choice and I harbor no resentment. All I hope is that they realize that, when shops close, it is because of customers like them. It's a fine line, but it boils down to getting what you pay for, whether you want "more for your money" or "*more* for your money." There's a keyword in there somewhere ...

FULL FRONTAL NERDITY by Aaron Williams



RENAISSANCE WOMAN

Laurine White

This is being sent to clear up a couple of misconceptions about Red Sonya that showed up on page 15 of ***CBG*** #1615. Robert E. Howard's Red Sonya appeared in his story "The Shadow of the Vulture," which was set during the Turkish siege of Vienna in 1529. The Middle Ages had ended around 1450, almost 80 years earlier.

Red Sonya was a woman of the Renaissance, not the Middle Ages. She could fire a cannon and carried pistols, a dagger, and a long Hungarian saber, all of which she could use. "Oaths flowed in a steady stream from Sonya's red lips and she laughed wildly as her saber sang home and blood spurted along the edge," from page 214 of "The Shadow of the Vulture" in *Lord of Samarcand and Other Adventure Tales of the Old Orient* by Robert E. Howard (edited by Rusty Burke, published in 2005 by the University of Nebraska Press, Bison Books). There is no non-sword-wielding Red Sonya.

James Mishler: *Right you are. However, though the story took place in the Renaissance, "Shadow" is one of Howard's "crusading" stories — certainly no less such a story than "Hawks of Outremer" or "The Sowers of Thunder." As such, though it does not take place in Outremer or Egypt, it's distinctly medieval in tone. So, in my mind's eye, it fits more comfortably under the "Middle Ages" than under "Renaissance" — which is how it ended up being labeled in the article.*

But then, as poor Ray has his head chock-full of details on the latest stories and story-lines from Marvel, DC, Dark Horse, and whatnot — with tales ranging from the birth to the death of universes — a simple mistake such as this can be forgiven.

Of course, had he mistakenly called her saber a claymore, well, that ***would*** *have been unforgivable!*

CELEBRATING 35 *CBG* YEARS

Paul Dale Roberts
5606 Moonlight Way
Elk Grove, CA 95758

In ***Comics Buyer's Guide*** #1616, there is so much to talk about.

I want to congratulate the whole staff for its 35th Anniversary — and what a special this issue was! Wow!

First, I enjoyed reading about the great comic books that are coming out from Devil's Due. I have always been a fan of *G.I. Joe* and *Transformers*. Devil's Due has its heart in the right place, looking out for the consumer of its products by offering a full refund, if the consumer isn't satisfied. How can you lose?

The Jimmy Palmiotti interview was superb! Palmiotti is an accomplished creator with the Midas touch: Everything he touches turns to gold. *Jonah Hex* and Jimmy Palmiotti are two peas in a pod; what Jimmy brings to *Jonah* is dramatic mayhem. You can see the influence that spaghetti Westerns had on Palmiotti. I wonder if he ever watched the "Trinity" spaghetti Westerns, which were similar to the Clint Eastwood movies. A creator can't remain stagnant; he or she has that drive for something new, something more challenging, something different. I can see why he doesn't just want to do the super-hero thing and wants to try something that is on a new level. *Jonah Hex* fits that bill.

The "It's Gumby" article was also spectacular. Art Clokey's creation lives on forever and now will live on through comics. Gumby makes cameos here and there and everywhere. This is a creation that won't fade away, and his most recent cameo was on a *Simpsons* episode.

Ah, the serials of yesteryear: How I love *Green Hornet*; my father, when he was a kid, would rush to the local movie theater in Lehigh, Okla., to watch his favorite movie serials, and *Green Hornet* was one of them.

Hard to believe that at one time ***CBG*** was called *The Buyer's Guide for Comic Fandom*. That was a mouthful, and ***Comics Buyer's Guide*** is much easier to say. But most fans just say ***CBG*** and people involved with comics know exactly what you are talking about.

How I remember when ***CBG*** was a newspaper and look at it now! Amazing! I enjoyed all of the back-issue drawings, like the avid readers of *TBG* (as it was once was called) from Mr. Spock to Alfred E. Neuman — and then I almost flipped when I saw the huge crossover of characters, like say 400 of them! What a way to celebrate the 400th issue!

Then, the drawing of Dennis the Menace taking a photo of The X-Men! Talk about the history of ***CBG***; there is a lot of history involved. Sure, there are reprints of comics, but perhaps there should be reprints of ***CBG***s in huge hardback books, volume after volume after volume for people to buy and collect and delve into the history of ***CBG***. I am honored to be part of that history with some ads that I have run in your publication and with my numerous letter-hacking rhetorics.

Did I mention I also enjoyed all of the great favorite covers that were

shown? May ***CBG*** have 35 more years — and more! *Rolling Stone*, move out of the way, because ***CBG*** is taking over! Congratulations again and again!

CBG makes comics more fun than they are!

JJM: *Paul, all of the covers from the first four years of* ***TBG*** *— 1971-74 — are now online at* ***www.cbgxtra.com****. Go to the parent page and click on "CBG Index" to take you there.*

SHAZAM!

Tom Hunter
Via CBGXtra.com

Enjoyed the article in ***CBG*** #1616 (Page 28) about the posters that circulated with the movie serials. Nice side list of the comic-book-related serial, as well.

How about a follow-up article on the serials themselves and what is available on either DVD or VHS?

I am fortunate to have a friend who has copies of many of these serials.

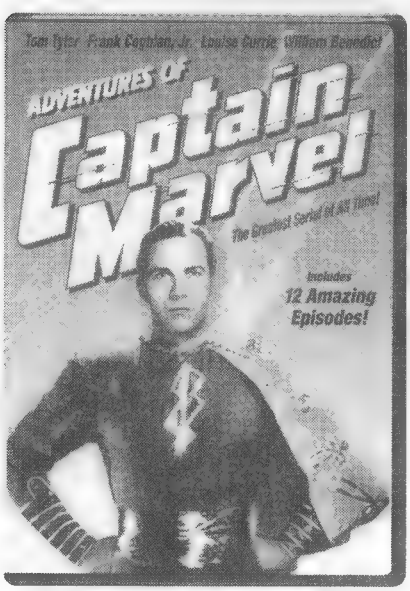
Over the years, I have watched quite a few, as well as owning copies of some myself.

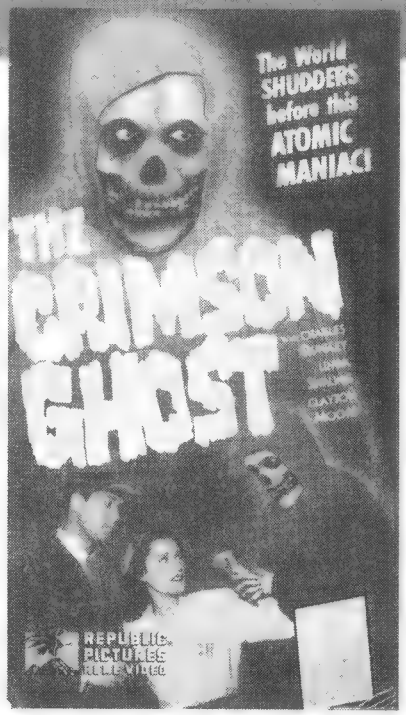
I think a follow-up article on the actual serials would be just as interesting to the comics fan base.

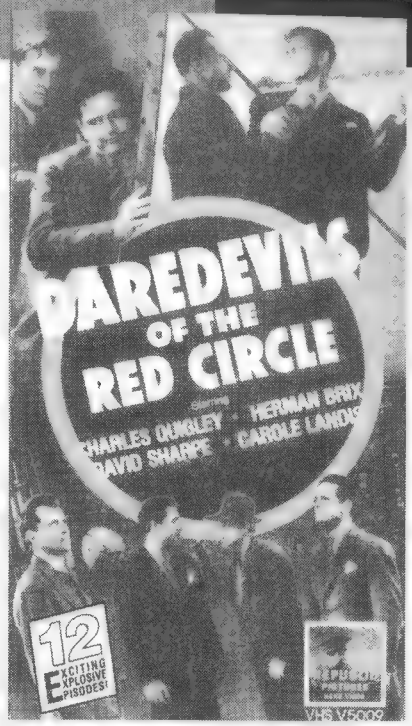
Anyone else?

BWF: *We had a series of such articles on serials a few years ago, and could certainly re-run those — or post them on the website, if there is sufficient interest.*

John Petty: *Both Columbia* ***Batman*** *serials are available now on commercial DVDs. I picked mine up at Best Buy and I strongly recommend them. They're dated and they're pretty low-budget, but they're a lot of fun.*







Two great Republic serials, though released in VHS, haven't yet made it to DVD. Neither, however, was comics-related.

One of the very best serials, ***The Adventures of Captain Marvel****, is also available commercially. This one is a real gem and should be in the DVD library of anyone who calls himself a serial fan.*

Also, a lot of the B-title serials, like ***Junior G-Men****,* ***The Green Archer****,* ***etc.****, are available on DVD. The quality varies, but they're still fun to watch.*

Of course, bootlegs of most serials are available at conventions, shows, ***etc.*** *Beware, as quality varies drastically from dealer to dealer.*

JJM: *Yeah, I've had some totally lock up the player to where you have to unplug the thing to get the disc to stop spinning. I don't think it's a regional coding thing — I just think they're burning so many they're frying their recorders ...*

Maggie: *The best serials tend to be those from Republic, where they tended to combine great stunting with non-cheat chapter endings. Among the 10 best, as I've said before, are* ***The Adventures of Captain Marvel*** *(list price $14.98),* ***Daredevils of the Red Circle****,* ***Spy Smasher****, and* ***The Crimson Ghost****. Unfortunately, only* ***Captain Marvel*** *is now available on pre-record — though at a bargain list price of $14.98 for three hours and 36 minutes of entertainment. (Be warned, though: At a screening for Otto Binder and his wife, decades ago, Mrs. Binder was heard to exclaim repeatedly, "Say the* ***word****, Billy!" And Otto commented, "I wrote Billy stupid — but I never wrote him* ***that*** *stupid.")*

MEDIA ATTENTION

Matt Levin
Walking Man Comics
123 Elm St.
Hatfield, MA 01038

Media attention! I'd like to bring to your attention, if need be, that *Time* magazine just did a two-page, generally favorable article on that new comic-book movie *V for Vendetta*. This's one that I have to see.

Not only that, but the freebie *Books*, a monthly paper available at the library, lists in the March issue several graphic novels written up as though graphic novels are just another genre to report about — no Wam!Bam!Pow!isms at all. Unfortunately, none are titles I especially recommend ...

These, though, *are*:

• *Essential Godzilla* by Doug Moench and Herb Trimpe has been twice delayed but is worth the wait: Moench redefines the big lizard, plays up his heroic side, sets him to wander the United States and tangle with S.H.I.E.L.D., The Champions, and The Avengers before he's through. Two favorite stories feature a miniaturized Godzilla battling rats in the sewers and, later, not only

finding the lost cattle and corralling the outlaws, but also saving the ranch and the rancher's daughter, as well. Moench plays the stories lightly, with deadpan, outrageous good humor. Trimpe is simply at his best drawing large green monsters, be they Godzilla or The Incredible Hulk.

• The first question that comes to mind with *Alice in Wonderland* by Lewis Carroll, illustrated by Rod Espinosa, is: Why do this again? Alice's adventures have been chronicled several times before. But Espinosa's version, while remaining true to Carroll's, is a rich blend of a little manga influence here, some Ted McKeever wild-line there, a little Geiger here and there, and an overall naturalism, lush with luxurious coloring. If Espinosa and Antarctic Press can see this project through to completion, theirs may well become the definitive illustrated version. The pace is steady, unrushed, the story allowed to unfold, all without a dull moment: one of the few higher-priced ($3.50) comics very well worth the having.

• David Petersen's *Mouse Guard, Belly of the Beast*, seems clearly intended for eventual hardcover children's book format: an eight-inch-square comic book. Like Rod Espinosa's *Alice*, *Mouse Guard* will find an awed audience. There's a depth of feeling to the coloring reminiscent of early animated features — and sharp, clear, clean line work. Petersen depicts a naturalist's mouse-world ... except that these mice wear capes, carry swords and staves, and talk, of course. The first adventure is primarily a simple rescue tale, battling a snake to free a comrade; but, within the telling, a world of rival kingdoms, spies and traitors, honor, and economic fortune is touched upon, hinted at, matching the depth of coloring with a depth of story. Petersen's is a wonderful first issue from Archaia Studios Press.

Regarding ***CBG*** #1616's article on "Gumby," I'd like to say that Art Adams' two issues rank right up top with Bob (*Flaming Carrot*) Burden's *Robot Comics* as three of the funniest, most warped, outrageous, well and beautifully done Unknown Comics of all time.

I'm curious as to what others might select for inclusion with this stratospheric elite.

Finally, I hope people are getting to see *Mirrormask*: a little short on plot, but the acting's good and, especially, the sets are fantastic, and it strikes one as an individual, wry, and creative vision.

TOP TEN

Jim Collins

Just a quick note to compliment you on your Swords and Sorcery issue, #1615.

Your coverage of the new *Conan* series and *Red Sonja* was enjoyable and informative.

Instead of the article that dealt with the Tolkienesque branch of Swords and Sorcery, though, I think you would have been better served writing of the Swords and Sorcery titles that were inspired by Robert E. Howard's type of harder-edged fantasy: featuring such as King Kull, Beowulf, Dagar, Claw, Skull the Slayer, or Lieber's Fafhrd and the Grey Mouser and Moorcock's Elric.

I think you missed a great opportunity to make your thematic Swords and Sorcery issue even more so.

Scott Beatty's choices for Top 10 DC covers were interesting, even though there were only three that I agreed with him on. I realize that they were merely a matter of personal preference and I do appreciate his choices, but I decided to look through my collection and make my own picks for top 10 faves.

As Beatty stated in his article, it was a daunting task and one that I almost wished I hadn't undertaken, because there were so many great covers.

I followed two criteria:

a) They must be choices from my own personal collection.

b) They must fall between the years 1971 and 1984, as Beatty's choices did.

In no particular order, here they are:

- *Superman* #317 (Nov 77) by Neal Adams
- *Atari Force* #9 (Sep 84) by Garcia Lopez
- *Star-Spangled War Stories* #156 (Jul 71) by Joe Kubert
- *Warlord* #29 (Jan 80) by Mike Grell
- *Sword of The Atom* #1 (of 4) (Sep 83) by Gil Kane
- *Weird War Tales* #80 (Oct 79) by Kubert
- *Adventure Comics* #436 (Dec 74) by Jim Aparo
- *DC Special #29: The Untold Origin of The Justice Society* (Sep 77) by Adams
- *Tarzan* #221 (Jul 73) by Kubert
- *The Shadow* #1 (Nov 73) by Michael Kaluta

I tried to make my choices strictly for their aesthetic appeal, but, as Beatty did in his article, I picked some for the promise they gave of an intriguing story within.

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BY BRIAN DOUGLAS AHERN

IN THE WAKE OF THE MANY ANNUAL AWARDS CEREMONIES, LET US NOT FORGET A CERTAIN INDEPENDENT FEATURE-- (OR THAT NORTHSTAR IS © MARVEL AND OBSIDIAN IS © DC.)

BUZZBACK MOUNTAIN

BACK IN 1963, THIS LONELY OUTPOST WAS USED FOR HERDING SHEEP--

TODAY THE RETREAT IS USED FOR A DIFFERENT TYPE OF GATHERING--

AND IN THE LATE '80s, I WAS CALLED A FAIRY!

AW, COME ON, NORTHSTAR! ALL OF US GAY CHARACTERS HAVE BEEN CALLED THAT!

NO, OBSIDIAN! I MEAN A LITERAL FAIRY!! SEE? WINGS, PIXIE DUST...

LISTEN TO YOURSELF! AM I THE ONLY WELL-ADJUSTED GAY HERO IN MAINSTREAM COMICS?!

THIS FROM THE GUY WHO TRIED TO KILL HIS OWN DAD!

HEY! THAT WASN'T BECAUSE I'M GAY!

ANYWAY, EVER SINCE I CAME OUT, I'VE BEEN MOSTLY FORGOTTEN. IT'S LIKE NOBODY KNOWS WHAT TO DO WITH ME.

YOU'VE GOT A POINT, JEAN PAUL.

SO MANY GAY CHARACTERS WIND UP AS VICTIMS, ARE USED ONLY IN MATURE AUDIENCE BOOKS, OR ARE JUST VACUOUS TOKENS.

I'VE GOT AN IDEA! WE'LL MAKE A MOVIE TO GARNER ATTENTION!

WE'LL GET AN ACCLAIMED DIRECTOR! A BREATHTAKING LOCATION! RAVES FROM THE CRITICS WILL HELP COERCE PEOPLE INTO SEEING IT! AND IT'LL BE PAINFULLY, TERRIBLY DEPRESSING--!

SNORK!

HUH? WHUH? MUST'VE DOZED OFF. ARE WE ON THE SECOND REEL YET?

DUNNO. I FELL ASLEEP IN MY JUNIOR MINTS.

WHY DID ENTERTAINMENT WEAKLY CALL THIS FLICK A "RAPTUROUS CROWD PLEASER"?? THEY MUST THINK CROWDS LIKE TO CRY ALL THE WAY HOME FROM THE THEATRE.

I GIVE IT THREE "V"s.

VERY LONG. VERY SLOW. VERY SAD.

NOW, WHEN DOES X-3 COME OUT?!

JUST SO YOU KNOW... DESPITE OUR EPISODE'S TITLE, BUMPKIN BUZZ IS NOT ONE OF COMICDOM'S GAY CHARACTERS.

HE'S JUST DRAWN BY ONE.

BUT SERIOUSLY, FOLKS, IF YOU'D CARE TO SEE A GOOD GAY-THEMED MOVIE OR TWO THAT WON'T MAKE YOU FEEL LIKE THROWING YOURSELF UNDER A BUS AFTER THE FLICK, DROP ME A NOTE FOR A SUGGESTION. MY VIDEO LIBRARY IS FULL OF THEM. I'LL EVEN THROW IN MY RECOMMENDED VIEWING LIST FOR STUDENT GSA GROUPS. BrizyComics@Hotmail.com

On creative license and ...

What is truly iconic?

by **PETER DAVID**

Iconic.

I see that word a lot whenever I'm reading fan commentary on Internet boards. Usually, the word starts popping up whenever some sort of major change is announced, contemplated, or executed. The critics start dusting off their sabers, tucking them into their scabbards, and giving them a sound rattling before announcing shock — shock! — that the publisher of some well-known character or other is going to be making or has made a substantive change to a beloved hero.

And sooner or later — much as Internet arguments tend to devolve into the evoking of Hitler and/or Nazis — someone inevitably takes a firm stand and says that the characters should not be changed because they are "iconic." Being iconic, the argument seems to go, requires that the character's name, costume, origin, powers, and personality be graven in stone, sealed in amber, slabbed, bagged and tagged, and made immutable. Lock them in Tupperware, safety sealed, so that future generations can open them years down the road and experience them just the way that God and comic-book creators (same thing, really) intended them to be.

The thing is, no one seems to want to explain *why* that should be. It is because it is because it is. It's the same way that people know God exists because they know it to be true, and so therefore It Must Be So, Q.E.D.

At first I was wondering why, exactly, being iconic required that a character be locked into an unchanging status. I suppose it crossed my mind, because, being in the midst of "Spider-Man: 'The Other' " in much the same way that one finds himself ass deep in alligators, I encountered a number of fans tossing that assertion in my general direction. So it was hard for me to ignore.

But then I puzzled about it further. And I puzzled and puzzled until my puzzler was sore. Strangely, it did not result in my heart becoming three times larger. It did, however, become even more confusing when, in *Starburst* #334, an article on Elisabeth Sladen of *Doctor Who* fame quoted Executive Producer Russell T. Davies as saying her character, Sarah Jane, "is iconic."

She *is*? She's on the same level with Superman, Batman, Spider-Man, Wonder Woman, Sherlock Holmes, King Arthur, and Tarzan? One would think that a mere Companion couldn't possibly outshine The Doctor, so he must be iconic, as well. And if there's *any* character who's undergone changes in his existence, it's The Doctor. In fact, he bears so little resemblance now to his original concept that — if immutability is a factor — it could be argued that the only iconic thing in that series is the TARDIS, and even then it's just a freakin' Police Box.

So what constitutes a character reaching the level of "iconic"? What are the qualities that he, she, or it must possess? In defining something as being iconic, it might well be that, like Justice Potter Stewart taking a swing and missing at defining "obscenity," we know it when we see it.

But I figure in the quest for the iconic — for that status that some would argue means Joe Straczynski committed a crime against fandom, fiction, and nature itself by having a stinger pop out of Spidey's arm or that caused fans to decry the electric-blue look for

Superman a few years back that *Saturday Night Live*'s "Weekend Update" claimed was prompted by the fact that Superman's old costume "wasn't gay enough" (I still think it would have looked fine if he'd been wearing ice skates) — the best place to start is with a dictionary definition. Going on the assumption that a dictionary will define "iconic" as "having the characteristics of an icon," I checked the definition of "icon" in *Merriam-Webster* and tried to figure out which one applies:

1: a usually pictorial representation **: Image**
2 [Late Greek eikOn, from Greek]**:** a conventional religious image typically painted on a small wooden panel and used in the devotions of Eastern Christians
3: an object of uncritical devotion **: Idol**
4: Emblem, Symbol <the house became an icon of 1860's residential architecture — Paul Goldberger>
5a: a sign (as a word or graphic symbol) whose form suggests its meaning **b:** a graphic symbol on a computer display screen that suggests the purpose of an available function

Definition 1 makes no sense, because, in comics, *everyone's* represented pictorially. In that way of thinking, Willie Lumpkin and 'Mazing Man are iconic, so I don't think so.

Definition 2 obviously doesn't apply. There's something to be said about definition 4, which on the surface seems to refer more to inanimate objects. And 5 is right out. Which leaves us with definition 3, "an object of uncritical devotion." I'm not too sure "uncritical" really applies to *anything* in the world of comics, but it's probably the closest we're going to come in trying to determine what makes a character iconic.

Perhaps it's a blend of 3 and 4: a character who has a fiercely devoted following and is emblematic of a type of individual or concept.

Speaking personally, I think there has to be something more than that. I think there has to be a measure of fame that's even more than fame. An element of instant recognizability that cuts across generations and countries. Charlie Brown is iconic. Charlie the Tuna is not. There are just too many factions in fandom to make mere fame the sole criteria of being iconic.

Let's go with the notion that Superman is iconic. Whatever "iconic" may turn out to be, he's it. With all due respect to Batman, Wonder Woman, Spider-Man, *et al.*, if we can't agree that Superman is iconic, then no one else in the world of super-hero comics can stake a claim to it.

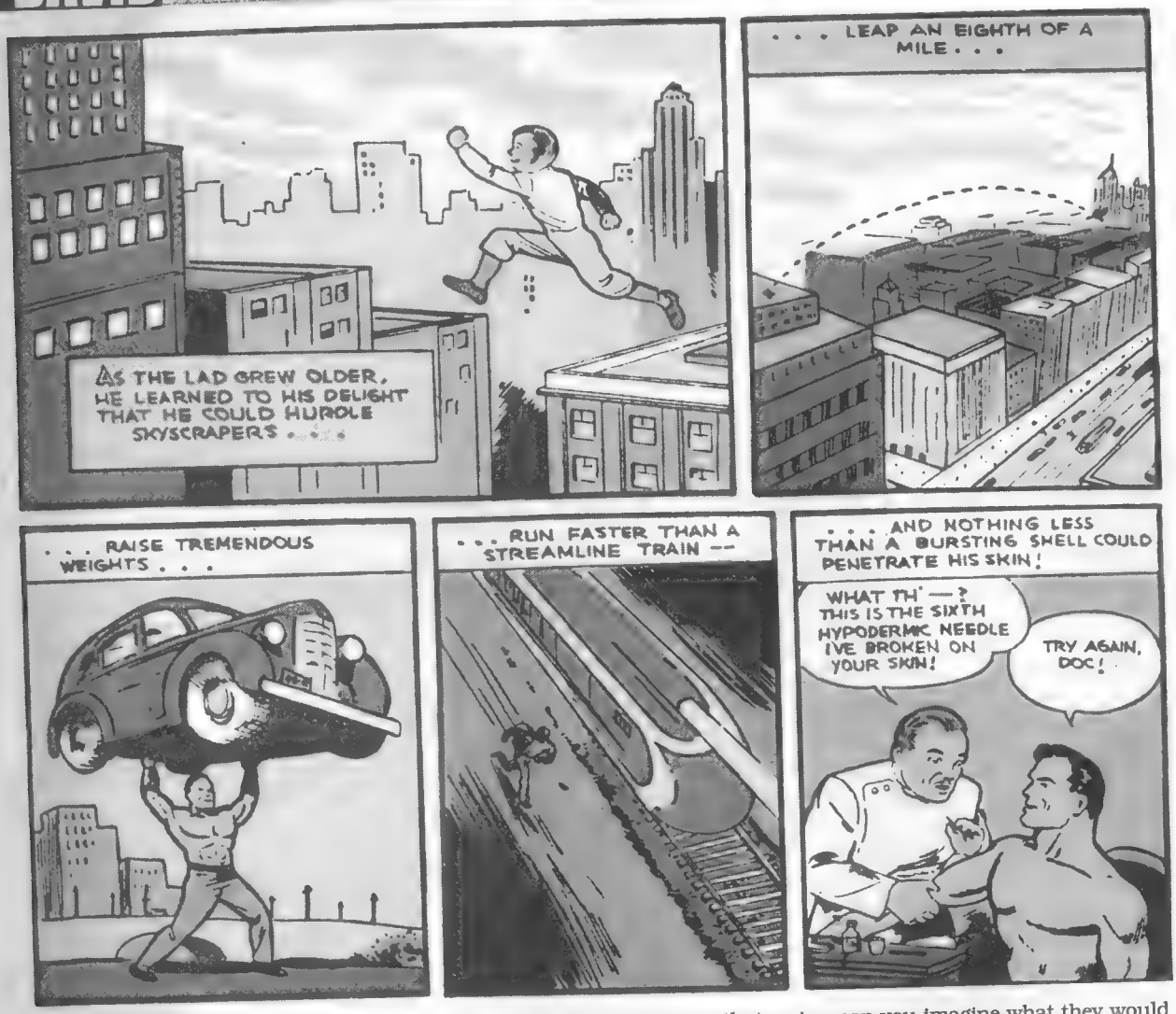
Except ...

If we contemplate the notion that one of the qualities of an iconic character is that he has remained steadfast and unchanged since his inception, and that anyone who endeavors to institute change is being downright disrespectful, then we have a major problem with the indisputably iconic Superman.

When Superman first appeared in *Action Comics* #1 in 1938, there were major differences between what he is now and what he was then. Yes, he was attired in the familiar blue and red but, first of all, he looked like — well, he kind of looked like Nic Cage, when you get down to it. The chest emblem was not the familiar diamond shape of today. And his powers were significantly more humble than now: He was able to bend steel as opposed to, well, anything; he could outrace a bullet as opposed to, say, light; nothing less than a bursting shell could penetrate his skin, compared to now, when a bursting shell wouldn't wake him from his nap; and he could leap an eighth of a mile. A whole eighth. Of a mile. Never mind his current power of flight; The Hulk could top an eighth of a mile. In fact, while writing *Supergirl*, I embarked on a storyline in which her powers were scaled back precisely to Superman's 1938 capabilities. Outraged fans, oblivious to the source of her power levels, decreed that no characters could properly wear the "S" on their chests and declare themselves super with such middling, unimpressive abilities. Plus: He worked for *The Daily Star*; his parents had different names; and he came from "a race of Supermen" so the whole light-from-a-yellow-sun aspect didn't factor in. And kryptonite being his weakness didn't even surface until the radio series.

Some might dismiss the subsequent changes over seven decades as being (no pun intended) superficial. Or they'd point to the eventual massive retcon of Earth-1 and Earth-2 as an "explanation." But many other iconic characters have also undergone changes of varying degrees, sometimes cosmetic, some-

So what constitutes a character reaching the level of "iconic"? What are the qualities that he, she, or it must possess?



Holmes has puttered all over the map and even well into the future. But put Holmes in the future and he's still indisputably Holmes.

times massive. Modern fans complained about the recent Jim Lee version of Batman that was very different in tone and style to what they were accustomed to and was, again, deemed "not appropriate for an iconic character." But back in the day, Batman introduced Robin, for Heaven's sake, transforming from a dark and frightening semi-horror-oriented crusader in darkness into a "friendlier," more accessible Caped Crusader. Can you imagine ... can you *imagine* ... if Robin had never existed and DC, as part of its "One Year Later" plan, dropped in a colorfully attired kid sidekick for Batman, in short pants, no less? The message boards would light up with declarations that Batman had "jumped the shark" higher than Fonzie.

Nowadays, the enlightened fan is dismissive of the writing of Fredric Wertham, but in this day and age where Michael Jackson is the litmus test for adult-youngster odd pairings, the snarky comments about Batman and pedophilia would abound. (And, by the way, let's face it: Wertham's methodology may have been awful, but he had a point about the whole Wonder Woman bondage thing. If *Xena* fans speculated wildly about the two leads in that series, can you imagine what they would have done, if the Lynda Carter version had featured Diana and Etta in ropes and chains being taunted by kinky villainesses in black leather? Suffering Sappho, indeed.)

The point of all the foregoing is that, while fans are busy freaking out over spider stingers and the "Iron Spider" outfit, one is slowly forced toward the conclusion that, not only are iconic characters not immune from change, but it is the fact that you can make substantive changes to them and they remain recognizably themselves that *makes* them iconic.

Look at Sherlock Holmes. Originally set in the Victorian Era, Holmes has puttered all over the map and even well into the future. But put Holmes in the future and he's still indisputably Holmes. One author has a series of books in which the woman-despising Holmes is married, but he's still Holmes. Even when George C. Scott played a guy who *thought* he was Holmes in *They Might be Giants*, the whole point was that he was so instantly recognizable. Hell, Holmes is cur-

rently on television on a series running regularly on Fox. He's called Gregory House (House? Holmes? Get it? "Did you hear about the guy who was so stupid he thought Sherlock Holmes was a housing development?"); his friend and confidant is Wilson rather than Watson, but that's pretty close; he's still got a drug problem; he's acerbic; he has a brilliant mind that lives for problems important enough to challenge him; and by the way, the number outside his flat is 221B (as in 221B Baker Street). He's Holmes.

Then, there's Tarzan. There have been dozens of different versions of Tarzan, most recently the unfortunate action-adventure series in which he dwelled in New York City and aided Jane (now a police detective) on cases. Sort of like *Beauty and Beast* except, in this case, he was prettier than she was. Nevertheless, Tarzan remains identifiable as Tarzan.

That's because Tarzan and Holmes are iconic.

To my mind, it is the very malleability of characters that makes them iconic. Different writers, different audiences, even different generations, can take the characters and twist them, bend them, fold, spindle, and mutilate them. Rather than object to changes, fans should embrace them, celebrate them. They should take heart in the notion that, without having long displayed the ability to withstand whatever changes differing writers, editors, and tastes have hit them with, we wouldn't be able to describe them as *being* iconic. It's not just a term that should be arbitrarily applied. It should be something that one has to — as John Houseman used to say — accomplish the old-fashioned way: by earning it.

No matter what you do to them, at the end of the day (or the story or movie or series), the audience sees the core of what made them great and memorable in the first place. Tarzan remains a study of savagery in a noble body. Holmes is still a study of a terribly flawed analyzer of facts who uses his relentless intelligence to combat a great enemy (in this case, death). Superman and Wonder Woman represent idealized versions of what we as people are capable of: the best and the brightest.

Which is probably why I still feel it was a ghastly mistake to have Wonder Woman execute Max Lord. I like to think that the best and brightest aspects of us can find an alternative to death in terms of dealing with opponents. Personally, I think it did the character a terrible disservice and it was a change cataclysmically ill-advised. I mean, at least when she was turned into Emma Peel a few decades back, there was a kitsch factor to it. There's no upside to this development. It is, to me, a betrayal of the core character.

But she'll survive.

Know why?

She's iconic.

Y'know what she could really use, though?

Stingers.

To my mind, it is the very malleability of characters that makes them iconic.

PETER DAVID, writer of stuff, has written *But I Digress* for *CBG* since #871 in 1990.

Write him at P.O. Box 239, Bayport, NY 11705 — and check out his website at **www.peterdavid.net**!

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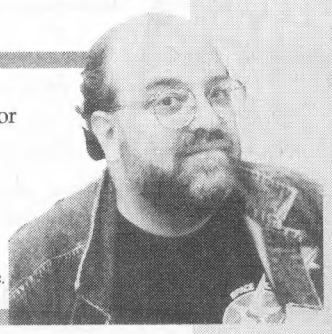

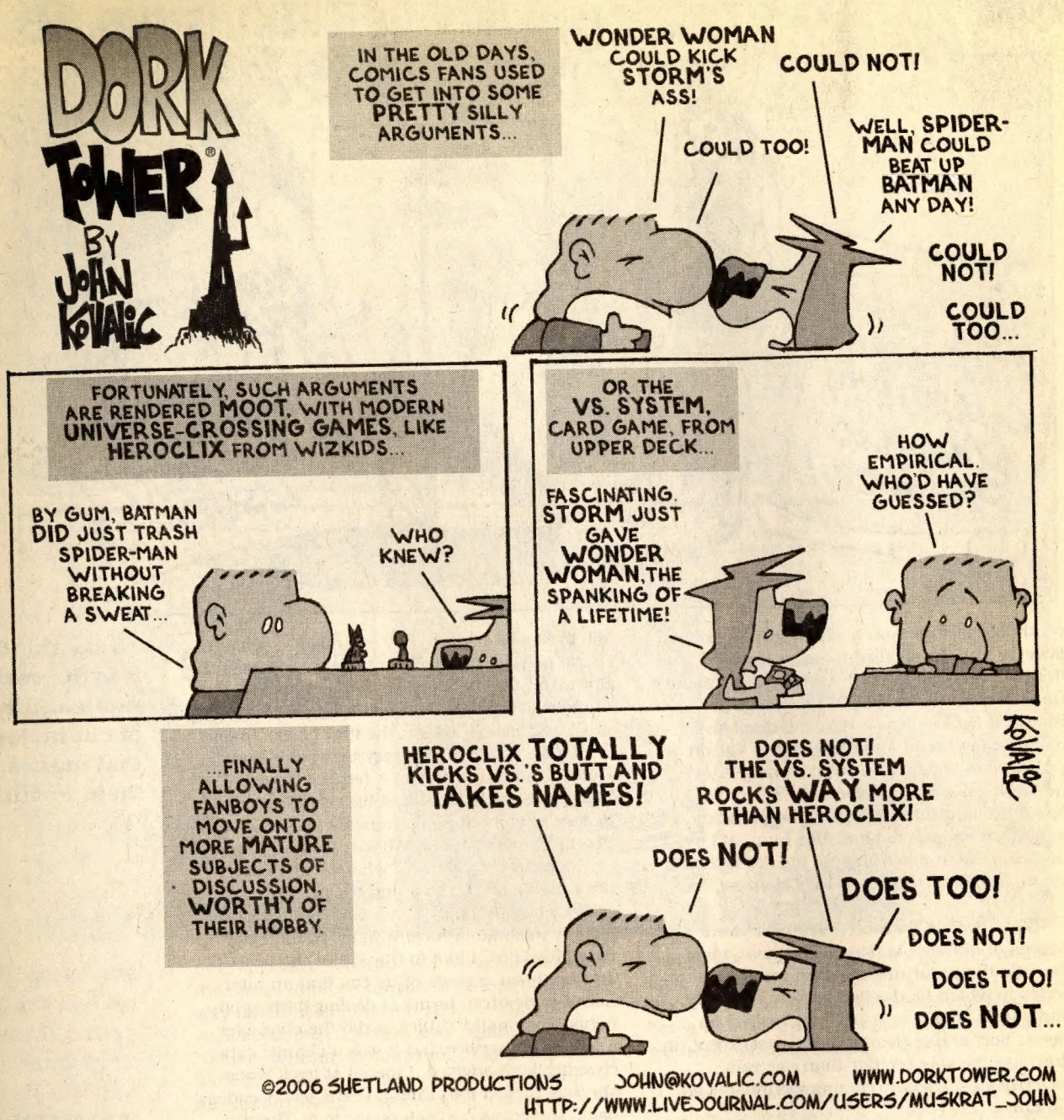

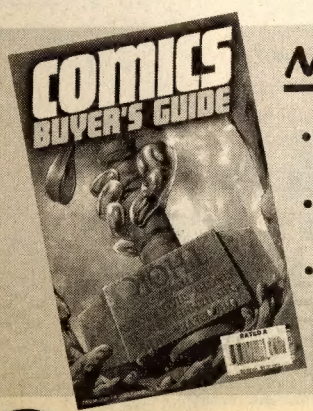

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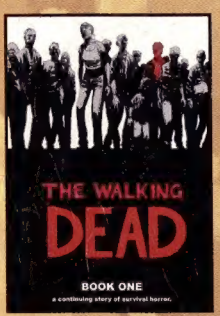

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